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VOLUME II

1960

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THE GOLDEN GERM

AN INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN SYMBOLISM

by

F. D. K. BOSCH

Late Professor of Indian and Indonesian Archaeology in the University of Leiden

1960

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TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN 1948 BY
UITGEVERSMAATSCHAPPIJ ELSEVIER, AMSTERDAM-BRUSSELS
ORIGINAL TITLE: DE GOUDEN KIEM

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS BY THE YSELPRESS DEVENTER, HOLLAND

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Die Symbolik verwandelt die Erscheinung in Idee, die Idee in ein Bild, und so, dass die Idee im Bild immer unendlich wirksam und unerreichbar bleibt und selbst in allen Sprachen ausgesprochen doch unaussprechlich bleibe. *Goethe, Sprüche in Prosa.*

Accumulated facts lying in disorder begin to assume some order when a hypothesis is thrown among them. *Herbert Spencer.*

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To the Memory of
ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

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PREFACE

If it did not sound so old-fashioned and cumbersome I should have given this study the sub-title "Prolegomenon to an introduction to the study of Indian symbolism". This wording would undoubtedly have made it clearer than is the case at present that I wish my work to be judged as a preparatory and preliminary exercise, and that I have intended to undertake no more than a journey of exploration in a hitherto little-investigated sphere of Indian culture. However, even without such a sub-title it will soon become clear to the reader of the following pages that the framer of the theories developed in them does not cherish the illusion of having achieved something of an exhaustive character, forming a whole in itself. For apart from the question of whether the method followed in my work is correct or not, the idea of a clear-cut whole is as incompatible with Indian symbolism as, for instance, the idea of a town enclosed within its ramparts is with that of a tropical primeval forest.

There is another and more important ground for reserve when the concept of symbolism is at issue. The present writer is well aware that scholars are in general extremely suspicious about symbolism as a subject of study, not indeed without reason. There is too much dilettantism in this field, theories have been thrown out too lightly, and hobby-horses have been trotted out in too unbridled a fashion for any high hopes to be aroused when someone yet again takes up the fight with the many-headed hydra of symbolism. However that may be, it is not so much the fight itself that is in question, or the person of the combatant, as the opponent who is fought against. By many, not least in the field of oriental studies, the existence of symbolism in general and of Indian symbolism in particular is cast in doubt or simply denied. According to them, its nature is fully explained by the "Lust zu fabulieren" which every individual as well as every community possesses in a greater or lesser degree and which, being completely unverifiable, is not a fit subject for serious research. So one may ask, in these circumstances, if there is any sense in joining battle with an opponent who is thought either to have no existence or to lead a merely illusory existence in the disturbed brain of some Don Quixote?

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But enough of this figurative language. The existence of symbolism cannot in fact be disputed. I shall not challenge the opinion of those who choose to regard symbolism and human fantasy as brother and sister, just as in my turn I request respect for the conviction that symbolism must be taken seriously as a subject of enquiry. This conviction may seize the researcher under the influence of reading a poem, the study of a piece of prose, the contemplation of a work of art, or in becoming acquainted with any other product of the Indian genius. It can originate, for example, in reading an authoritative text such as the *Lalitavistara*, the life-story of the historical Buddha. In doing so, anyone will be struck by how important a part is played in this history by miraculous tales, and by the profound and pious earnestness with which they are related. And inevitably the question will pose itself whether it is very probable that so dominant an influence in these traditions is to be ascribed to the subjective desire to indulge in fancies that beyond and above there should be no room for something else, something higher; and whether it is not far more probable that in those stories, in a language unknown to us, truths were revealed to the initiated listener that were of paramount importance to him.

The plastic arts speak to us even more graphically of such matters. If we take as an arbitrary example of this form of art a highly 'fantastic' production such as the Ekapādamūrti of Śiva, illustrated in Plate 73, we observe that while the upper part of the deity's body is normally formed both his legs are grown together in one, and that from his sides the gods Brahmā and Vishṇu spring forth, thus forming a sort of human candelabrum on a pedestal. With this singular image before us, and after taking into account the features falling within the art historian's purview, such as its origin, style, school, date, and so on, it would be difficult to deny that there yet remains in the image something unidentified. And we must ask ourselves again whether this 'something' might not be very important, and whether on closer investigation it might not turn out to be the most essential part of the image, *viz.* its meaning as a symbol, disclosing something higher than what is merely perceived by the senses.

Once we are shaken in our belief that the last word has been said when an image as an object of art has been analysed, and when by happy chance a *sādhana* has revealed to us the name under which the deity was known in the register of Indian iconography, then we shall be receptive to the truth of the words of Paul Mus: "Nous pouvons maintenant établir avec une netteté suffisante ce qui sépare l'art indien du nôtre et le caractérise. Les oeuvres de notre production artistique sont sa fin et elles se placent

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sur le même plan que l'artiste. Tout autre est l'objet de l'art asiatique. Il n'est un art qu'au sens où la magie est un art. Ses réalisations tangibles, symboles, monuments, ne sont que son point d'appui pour créer ou évoquer, sur un autre plan, une sorte de contre-type transcendant, en lequel est sa fin véritable".

If this is correct, is there any further justification for allowing Indian archaeology to remain what it has been so far too prominently: the scrupulous recording and description of antiquities from the standpoint of the historian of art? Has not the time now come to deepen this 'archaeography' into a true 'archaeology', and to reserve the latter name for the discipline devoted to restoring to ancient Indian art the significance which constitutes its real meaning and *raison d'être*?

These questions are easily asked, but it is infinitely more difficult to build the bridge to connect the 'réalisations tangibles' of Indian art with the 'opposite bank' where, according to Mus, their 'contre-type transcendant' must somewhere be found. The first matter to be dealt with here is the method of bridge-building, the method in which each builder exposes himself to the danger of which a critic once ironically warned a prospective writer on *Hamlet*: that his work will consist of two parts: a good one in which he demolishes the theories of his predecessors, and a bad one in which he propounds his own theory.

Although it will not be necessary to demolish existing theories, it is fairly certain that new constructions are bound to be made. Since none of the attempts so far to establish a fixed and enduring 'bridge-head' on the 'opposite bank' have been able to boast of much success, there is ample reason for a new attempt to be made; provided that it is subject to strict rules of method, and provided also that its right to exist be demonstrated by the solution of a greater number of problems than is made possible by any of the existing theories.

The question whether the method followed in the present work is correct or not may be left to the reader to answer. I shall say no more about it here. There are, however, two points which demand closer attention in this preface.

Firstly: I have taken as point of departure the *makara*, the well-known Indian water-monster; but another motif—such as the conch, the wheel, or the jewel, for example—could have served equally well. In choosing the makara and in tracing the connections between this monster-head and other motifs, and then, clinging to this thread, penetrating to the core of Indian symbolism, I have led the reader by the way which I myself took in my reconnaissance. But I have spared him the many

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disappointments and delays which befell me as a result of following wrong trails which led to dead ends.

This brings me to the second point. Let us for a moment imagine Indian symbolism as a woven fabric with a very complicated pattern focussed on a centrally placed figure, a pattern only to be analysed and understood through this central element. If we further imagine that threads from this weave hang all round, of which however only a few lead to the heart of the pattern, then it is clear how necessary it is, having grasped one of these threads, to keep on following that thread right to the central point. And it is clear, too, how imperative it is to resist the temptation to pass from thread to thread and lose oneself in the arabesques of subordinate figures and patterns, thus running the risk of being lead about in a circle and eventually ending up in disappointment back at where one started.

This simile explains why, initially at least, I have followed an extremely narrow path, closing my eyes to everything on the right or left, and continually holding fast to the single guide-thread that I had, or thought I had, in my hand.

Something else is also explained by it which, at first sight, might appear a serious omission: that I have scrupulously refrained from adducing parallels of non-Indian origin, however forcefully some of these urged themselves upon me. This proceeding was necessary because the danger of making mistakes and losing the way, already imminent enough in the sphere of Indian culture, would have been even greater if I had entered unfamiliar areas and tested my theories on material not well known to me.

Finally, a few remarks on the circumstances in which the Dutch edition of this work was produced, and of which traces are still visible in the present edition. This *Introduction* was conceived and first committed to paper during the second world war, at a period when the connections between my home and the outside world were broken or were hardly worthy of such a designation; and it is mainly the fruit of study of the limited material which I had at my disposal where I lived. After the liberation, it is true, this material could be amplified on various points from the rich library and photographic collections of the Kern Institute at Leiden; but the work was then in too advanced a stage of development for drastic changes to be made. The consequence was not only that gaps in the literature consulted and in the illustrations were permitted to remain, but that at the same time a too one-sided attention was paid to the Hindu-Javanese

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aspect of Indian symbolism, the aspect on which there happened to be the best documentation available in the author's isolation.

The English edition differs in several respects from its Dutch predecessor. In the first place, I have refrained from enlarging upon certain subjects in which an English-speaking public could hardly be interested, since they are concerned too exclusively with Hindu-Javanese matters; while, on the other hand, a number of symbols which were reluctantly left undiscussed in the Dutch edition have found a place in the present version. Thus, for instance, an attempt has been hazarded to explain the *stūpa*, the Buddhist symbol *par excellence*, from the standpoint that I have adopted. The text has also been augmented on various other points by drawing on literature relating to my subject published since 1947. The chief difference, however, between the English and the Dutch editions lies in the fact that in the former grateful use could be made of the criticisms which the latter evoked from various sides. In particular, I have derived profit from the detailed and constructive reviews devoted to my work by my colleagues Dr. F. B. J. Kuiper, Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Leiden, and Dr. A. J. Bernet Kempers, until recently Professor of Indonesian History and Archaeology in the University of Indonesia. I have made use of their criticisms not only to correct mistakes in my work and to add new evidence to my argument, but also to adopt here and there a more cautious position in regard to certain problems than the rather hazardous hypotheses and conclusions that I had proposed.

Besides my critics, I am indebted also to all who have helped in the preparation and publication of this English edition. Among them I would mention in the first place the Netherlands Organization for Pure Scientific Research, which by granting a subsidy has made possible the translation into English. Grateful thanks are also due to Dr. T. H. van den Honert, Professor of Botany in Leiden University, for providing me with the beautiful drawing of the submerged part of the lotus plant (fig. 2), a part which is of great importance for the appreciation of Indian symbolism but for an illustration of which existing botanical works were searched in vain; and to Professor M. B. Emeneau of the University of California for permitting me to reproduce the drawing of the epiphytical tree from his illuminating article on strangling figs in Sanskrit literature (fig. 10). After the untimely death of my translator, Mr. A. Fontein, the translation of this Preface was kindly undertaken by Dr. Rodney Needham, Lecturer in Social Anthropology in the University of Oxford, to whom I express

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my sincere thanks. I am also much obliged to Mr. A. P. Kelder, Librarian to the Kern Institute, for assisting me with the proofs.

I cannot end this Preface without expressing my great gratitude to those who have been my predecessors and guides in my investigations. It is not possible to mention them all by name, but the footnotes will make my debt amply clear. I must make an exception, however, in the case of three authors whom I regard in a special sense as my predecessors.

In the first place, Émile Senart, the founder of the study of Indian symbolism, whose *Essai sur la légende du Bouddha*, published in 1882, still stands as a monument of strikingly correct method and awe-inspiring learning, even though many of its fundamental ideas have since been challenged.

Among authors of my own generation I would name Paul Mus, the writer of the masterly work *Barabuḍur*, by which a new branch of scholarship, the 'archéologie religieuse comparée', was brilliantly inaugurated. If I think that the solutions to certain problems he raises should be sought in other directions than he has indicated, this does not detract from the respect in which I hold his pioneering endeavours, nor does it diminish my gratitude for the profit which I have derived from his work.

Finally, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, of whose regretted death I learned just before I finished the preface to the Dutch edition. I honour him as the precursor who in his *Yakṣas* and in a long series of other studies discerned for the first time the full extent of the importance of Indian symbolism, and who showed the way to its core without being able to follow it to the end. I gladly acknowledge that he more than any other helped to open my eyes to what I am convinced constitutes the key to this symbolism. The fact that I have dedicated this *Introduction* to his memory may express how much I feel indebted to him.

F. D. K. B.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the chief attractions of the Barabuḍur lies no doubt in the wealth and the variety of the decorative motifs appearing on the main walls, balustrades, niches, gateways and all the other parts of the monument. These motifs are comparable with human beings in so far as they may be distinguished into modest and bold ones. The former are those that keep out of sight or humbly remain in the background, whereas the latter like to be conspicuous and to monopolize the attention. As fate will have it, it is the first class of motifs that is often overlooked, not only by the great mass of sightseers, but also by the majority of archaeologists, unless the photographic lens deals with them separately and so, by isolating them from their surroundings, exposes them in their true value.

On the Barabuḍur we meet with a decorative motif which, in spite of the fact that it appears no less than four hundred times and has in each case been given a conspicuous place, seems to be destined to remain unobserved. The cause of this is that it forms the decoration of the narrow posts used as partitions between the narrative reliefs on the main walls of the monument, with the result that the eye when following attentively the relief scenes is apt to travel past the partitions without being arrested by them. Once we have noticed the motif, however, it appears fully to deserve our attention, were it only for the fact that it belongs to the oldest and most enduring inheritance of Indian art. Not only is it frequently applied already on the oldest Buddhist monuments, *e.g.* at Bharhut and Sānchi (Pl. 2*a-c*), but in subsequent periods of continental and South-East Asian art it continues to occupy a place in architecture and ornament (Pl. 3*a-d*).

On the Barabuḍur it appears as a lotus scroll which, at the base of the post, rises from a figure representing alternately an animal, a human being, or one or other emblem, and which, turning to left and right, winds its way upwards emitting from the curves so formed mostly three, but sometimes two or four, spiral side branches (Pl. 1*a*, *b*).

On a superficial view, there is a great similarity in the way the lotus scroll

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motif (Skr. *kalpalatā*) has been applied and worked out on the posts but close observation soon reveals that, here as elsewhere, under the monotonous surface of the ornament a wealth of elegant and interesting variations on the theme chosen present themselves.

One of these variations is remarkable enough to be made the starting-point of the following investigation. It is to be found in the decoration of the post in Pl. 1*b* showing at the base the head of a *makara,* the well-known legendary aquatic monster. This figure slightly differs from the current type in so far as the hind part has been given the shape of a quadruped and the eyes and the body, too, underwent certain changes. But with these details we are not concerned here. The main point is that the front part of the animal does not differ from the normally formed makara-head recognizable by the open mouth and the uplifted trunk shaped like an inverted S the extremity of which is curled forward. The lotus rhizome, rising from this extremity, after curving to the left and upwards, forms a node (Skr. *granthi* or *parvan*) and there splits into the main stem which continues its upwards course, and into a side branch that forms a so-called 'recalcitrant spiral', *i.e.* a spiral curving downwards while gradually swelling and finally merging into a claviform extremity representing a secondary node from which issues fanwise a broad receding ('recalcitrating') bundle of leaves and sprouts stylized into arabesques.

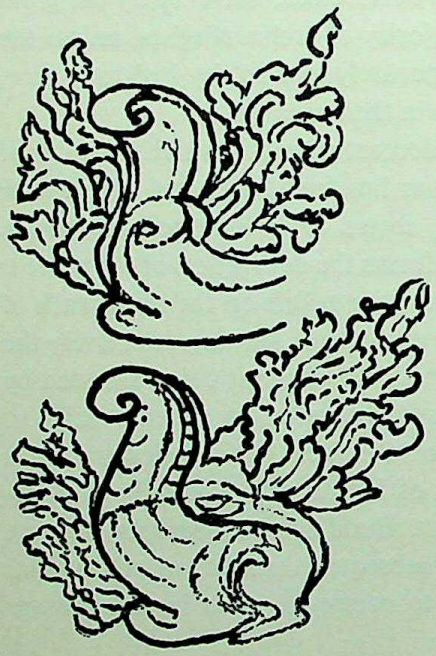

Fig. 1.

Now the point to which I wish to call the attention is the resemblance between the makara-head at the base of the post and the part of the recalcitrant spiral which is close above it and is formed by the secondary node (fig. 1). This resemblance does not merely concern the characteristic makara-profile in the outline of the vegetable formation, but also typical details such as the open mouth of the animal with the leaves springing from it, and the trunk divided in two by a line with arabesques placed at the back, all of which details, in a vegetable form, are found again in the plant.

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Our first impulse would be to attribute this resemblance to chance or to the fancy of the Barabuḍur sculptor and leave it at that. Yet, if we observe that the type of makara just mentioned — that with the trunk divided by a line and curling forward — is known not only from the Barabuḍur but also from elsewhere and that its vegetable counterpart, the node, appears in nearly every Hindu-Javanese kalpalatā, then the chance seems rather remote that the resemblance observed on the Barabuḍur should have only local and incidental significance. There is reason to ask whether this resemblance could be indicative of a definite, hitherto unsuspected, relation between the makara and the node *(parvan)*, a resemblance which might enable us to study the makara-problem from a new point of view. No one would consider this altogether superfluous, for although the development of the makara-motif has been frequently traced with fairly satisfactory results, some of the most important questions relating to it have not yet been answered: What was the reason of the remarkable preference and emphasis which was displayed by the Indian, and even more so by the Hindu-Javanese artists, when applying the makara as a decorative motif? Was it mere chance or arbitrariness? Or was there a deeper cause, and if so, what was this motive power?

The answer to these questions need not be discussed now. Our first task will be to follow the direction indicated by the resemblance between makara and parvan and leading to a comparative investigation which will enable us to establish, on morphological grounds, the genetic relation between the monster motif and the node.

As far as the makara is concerned, the field for the greater part has been prepared through the above-mentioned studies in stylistic development of which those by Cousens, Brandes, Vogel, Van Erp and Vogler rank foremost.[1]

From these studies we gather that from its first appearance in Indian art, over the entrance to the cave of Lomas Rishi in Bihar (ca. 350 B.C.), the makara was pictured as a fantastic quadruped with a crocodile-like head, a snout curled backwards and a scaly crest on the tail. In the next

[1] J. Ph. Vogel, "Le makara dans la sculpture de l'Inde", *RAA*, 1930, pp. 133 ff. (and the older literature mentioned there); A. K. Coomarawamy, *Yakṣas*, II (1931), pp. 47 ff.; W. F. Stutterheim, "The meaning of the kāla-makara ornament", *IAL*, n.s. III (1929), pp. 27; Devaprasad Ghosh, "The makara in Indian Art", *Calc. Rev.*, 1930, pp. 101 ff.; Th. van Erp, *Barabuḍur*, II, pp. 379 ff.; G. de Coral Rémusat, "Influences javanaises dans l'art de Rolûoḥ", *JA*, 1933; "Animaux fantastiques de l'Indochine, de l'Insulinde et de la Chine", *BEFEO*, XXXVI (1936), pp. 427 ff.; "Concerning some Indian influences in Khmer art", *IAL*, n.s., VII (1933), pp. 110 ff.; E. B. Vogler, *De monsterkop in de Hindoe-Javaanse Bouwkunst* (The Monsterhead in H.J. Architecture), 1949.

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stage of development, represented *e.g.* at Bharhut (ca. 150 B.C.), the crocodile-head with curled up snout is maintained but the mouth is now wide open, the jaws are provided with sharply pointed teeth, the hind legs have disappeared and the body is transformed into a scaly tail rolled up volute-wise. But for some minor details, like the addition of ram's horns and the replacement of the tail by the body of a fish with caudal fin, this type has also been used at Mathurā (50-200 A.D.) and at Amarāvatī (150-300 A.D.), but when after some centuries the monster reappears, *e.g.* in Gupta art (300-600 A.D.) and at Seven Pagodas (7th century A.D.), it has undergone an important metamorphosis. The fish-like tail is replaced by a luxuriously developed bush tail, the front legs have disappeared and the head is provided with an elephant's trunk with the tactual organ curling forward. In its South-Indian mediaeval form the makara finally appears as a monster with ornate bush tail, elephantine head with trunk and the body of an elephant, rhinoceros, or some other pachyderm (Pl. 10*a, b;* fig. 8*e-g.*)

The main features of the development of the makara thus being established, in the case of the parvan the situation is far less satisfactory owing to the fact that this part of the lotus so far has been given little attention and preparatory studies are altogether lacking. This compels us first of all to trace the metamorphoses of the parvan which will provide us with a reliable basis for comparison with the makara. In order to examine further the results of this comparison it will be desirable to extend our enquiry considerably and penetrate gradually in the field of Indian ornamental art. It will then become apparent that the makara-figure is but a minor part in a vast group of closely interwoven symbols and motifs. If, finally, we ask again whether the frequent application of the monster-motif has an other and deeper root than the mere decorative one we shall have a much wider field to explore and far more intricate problems to solve than in the present part of our enquiry which is merely concerned with problems of a morphological and comparative nature.

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I

TWO INDIAN MONSTER-HEAD MOTIFS AND THEIR PROTOTYPES

A. PARVAN AND MAKARA

The parvan in Indian art

Before we start out on our examination of the forms of the parvan in Indian art we do well to remember that the lotus in its natural state (*Nelumbium Nelumbo* Linn.) consists of a root-stock or rhizome (Skr. *bisa, mṛiṇāla* or *kanthāhvaya*) creeping horizontally in the mud and carrying nodes (Skr. *parvan* or *granthi*) at regular intervals, each node being provided with scales and rootlets, and giving rise to numerous leaves and flowers which rise to the surface of the water. In other words, there is a creeping, submerged, root-like stem which throws off flowers and leaves at intervals but there is no branching stem, and the stalk of each flower or leaf rises directly from the rhizome.[1]

According to A. W. Eichler (*Blüthendiagramme*, Leipzig, 1878) the morphological value of the various organs of the lotus-plant may be described as follows (fig. 2). The rhizome consists of a sequence of alternatingly two very short internodes and one much longer one. At every three nodes thus formed close together two scales followed by a green peltate leaf are found. The first scale S1 is originally directed downwards. The second scale S2 and the petiole of the leaf *lf* are found at the upper side. The long internode rh1 of the rhizome, however, breaks through S1 so as to shift the position of this scale towards the upper side. The flower stalk, if present (not given in the figure), originates from the axil of S2. The scale St covering the base of the long internode rh1 is considered as an auxiliary stipule belonging to leaf 1f. Again, through this stipule a bud in the axil of petiole 1f is breaking, giving rise to a side branch

[1] Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, II, p. 58 — The stem and side branches of the rhizome should not be mistaken for the stalks of the leaves and flowers of the plant. The former are submerged, fleshy and thick, whereas the latter grow above the water, are thin and fibrous and covered over the whole surface with short sharp prickels. It goes without saying that the 'edible lotus stalks' which are often mentioned in literature (*e.g.* in the *Bisajātaka*) actually are parts of the rhizome. On account of their hardness, stalks of leaves and flowers are quite unfit for human consumption.

For the following description and for the drawing of fig. 2 my sincere thanks are due to Dr. T. H. van den Honert, professor of botany in Leiden University.

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b of the rhizome. This side-branch carries at its base two scales one of which is seen in the figure, sb. For the rest this branch is a replica of the main rhizome.

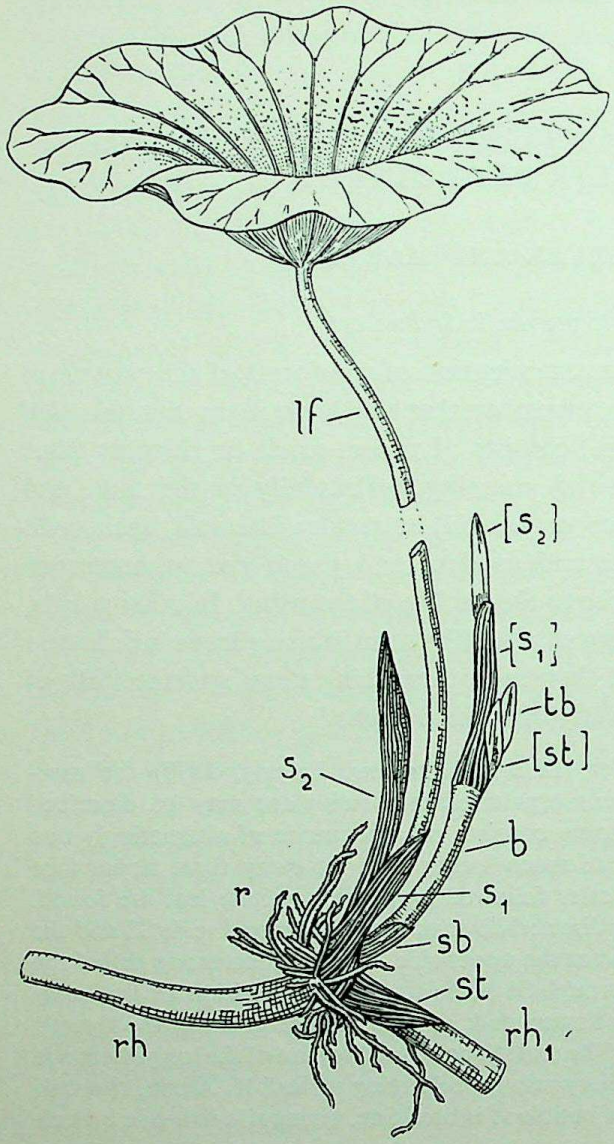

Fig. 2

In order to employ the natural plant for decorative purposes, various adaptations have been introduced. First of all, it has been stylized in such a manner that the rhizome took on a graceful winding line with curves and nodes at equal intervals and emitting side-branches, leaves and flowers, these branches appearing as a rule alternately to the left and right of the stem and rolled up spirally.

After having been remodelled in this fashion, the submerged, horizontally growing part of the plant was made visible to the spectator and transformed into a decorative motif. For that purpose various methods were adopted:

I. The horizontal plane in which the stem with its side-branches moves forward was placed on end revolving lengthways at an angle of 90 degrees, this giving rise to an ornament stretching in a horizontal direction and showing two ways of treatment:

a. a symmetrical one in which the rhizome springs from the middle of the pane to be decorated and from there emits spiral branches to left and right (fig. 3*a*);

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b. an asymmetrical one in which the point of origin of the rhizome is situated in the extreme left or right hand corner of the pane and one spiral branch issues from this point (fig. 3*b*).

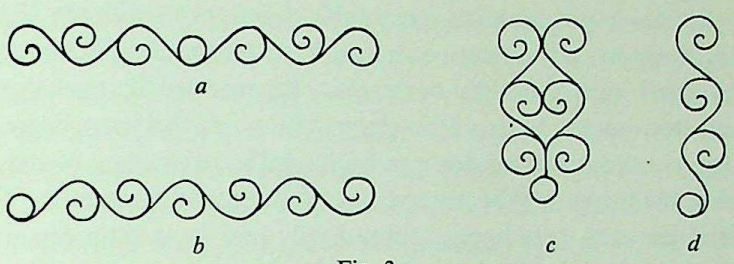

Fig. 3

II. The plane mentioned under I was again placed on end, but now revolving broadways at an angle of 90 degrees, thus giving rise to an ornament moving vertically upward and also presenting two modes of treatment:

a. a symmetrical one in which the rhizome springs from the middle of the base, rising vertically and emitting spiral side-branches to left and right (fig. 3*c*);

b. an asymmetrical one with the point of origin of the rhizome in the same place, but now it follows a winding course upwards with spiral branches to left and right (fig. 3*d*).[2]

After these introductory remarks we may now proceed to enquire into the place of the parvan in the Indian lotus-ornament and the manner in which it is usually represented.

In all cases where at Bharhut the lotus ornament of the I*a* type has been employed for decorating the copings of the stūpa railing, the parvan appears in a very simple form, *viz.* as a round or angular swelling of the stem provided with a single oblong scale grooved lengthwise and with crenated edges (fig. 4*a, b;* Pl. 4*a-c*).

At Sānchi where both the I*b* and II*b* types are represented, the parvans are practically the same as at Bharhut, but the scale leaf usually is a little shorter and is sometimes coupled with a second leaf placed under the stem giving the parvan somewhat the appearance of a monster-head with open jaws (fig. 4*e;* Pl. 2*a-c*, 5*a, b*).

[2] From the above remarks it follows that most of the stylizations of the lotus plant as they appear in decorative art are, botanically speaking, quite incorrect, as they suggest an upright growing *branching* main stem which in reality does not exist. See *e.g.* the bronze incense-burner from Anurādhapura in our Pl. 2*d*.

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For the time being this development is not continued. At Gandhāra a motif of Hellenistic origin makes its appearance, *viz.* an imbricated roll garland borne on the shoulders of male figures. After having reached Mathurā and Amarāvatī, this motif exerts an influence on the Indian lotus-ornament giving rise to remarkable mixed forms with the history of which, however, we are not concerned here. As for Gandhāran art, it is not of great importance for our enquiry because usually the kalpalatā is here treated as a mere decorative element in which the parvans are either lacking or have dwindled down to an insignificant swelling of the stem.[3]

The same thing may be observed at Mathurā and Amarāvatī. Clearly outlined parvans here appear sporadically and have little remarkable, except in the cases in which the rhizome has been given the peculiar shape of the above-mentioned roll garland. Although Hellenistic influence has strongly inspired this design and much of the Indian character of it has been effaced, a very curious and original element has survived. In the lower curve of the garland there appears now and again a combination of two makara-heads placed back to back and separated by an ornamental ribbon, each provided with small tusks in the upper and lower jaw, a trunk curled backwards and a wide open mouth allowing a passage for the heavy mass of the garland (Pl. 7*c*). The fact that these heads are no mere decorations but represent a parvan is indicated by the rootlets growing obliquely downwards from the lower jaw and also by the thin shoots springing from both sides of the makara-mouth and easily recognizable as the stalks of leaves and flowers growing out of every lotus-parvan.

The fact that in the garland the makara has replaced the parvan gains in significance if we observe that the same peculiarity is found elsewhere.

An interesting example of this is found on the doorjamb of a temple at Māmallapuram (Chingleput district, Madras, 7th century), Pl. 7*b*, where, amidst irrelevant details which will be discussed in an other connection, we observe as the elemental part of the ornament a serpent's body winding upwards in three curves and replacing the normal ascending lotus-stem. Like the stem the body shows at regular intervals parvans from which spring side-branches — or in this case serpent-bodies — curving downwards. Just as at Amarāvatī, in these parvans makara-heads are easily recognizable as is clearly shown by the specimen over the female figure.

A third example of the same substitution appears on a relief-scene of the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchīpuram (7th century, Pl. 7*a*). It represents

[3] See *e.g.* A. Foucher, *AGBG*, I, p. 221, fig. 96 and 97.

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god Śiva residing on mount Kailāsa in the enclosure of a monumental gateway. To his right and left, in the steep rocky walls of the mountain, caves may be seen harbouring ascetics and wild animals whilst behind him there is a huge tree which, over his head, splits into two branches, both of which bend outwards and on the sides of the entablature of the gateway end in makara-heads.[4] This design, too, particularly the tree shape of the lotus, will be the subject of further discussion, but even without detailed explanation it is evident that on this relief, just as at Amarāvatī and at Māmallapuram, the monster-head has replaced the parvan.

The fact that this replacement would not have been possible but for the Indian conception of a certain relationship, or rather equivalence, between makara and parvan which made them interchangeable, agrees very well with the conclusions which our present inquiry into the relation between makara and parvan has enabled us to draw.

When after this brief digression we now proceed with our examination and consider the art of the Gupta age and the ensuing periods in order to trace step by step the development of the parvan motif, it soon becomes clear that the material available for this examination is far from adequate. This is partly caused by the loss of numerous monuments resulting from the Mohammedan invasions which infested Northern India, partly by the fact that photographs of the details of architectural ornaments, indispensable for our purpose, are extremely rare.[5]

The parvan in Hindu-Javanese art

Fortunately, the material that is scanty or totally absent in India proper may be abundantly supplemented with data from the flourishing period of Central-Javanese art. As it happens, in this art both the makara and the kalpalatā to which the parvan belongs by nature are the favourite decorative motifs, which makes Central Java the ideal area for studying and comparing the two motifs.

[4] It should be noticed that in the top of the gateway no less than three pairs of makaras are depicted: two pairs, placed back to back, are resting on the corners of the entablature, whilst the third pair, forming the extremities of the tree branches, are protruding sideways from the tops of the pillars.

[5] Detailed pictures of the older Buddhist monuments are not wanting. I have in mind particularly the later, non-Buddhist architecture. Cf. J. Brandes' remarks of 58 years ago (*NBG*, XXXIX, 1901, p. CX) which are still valid: "It is to be regretted that in the British publications on the later Indian antiquities usually too little effort has been made to present the details clearly and separately. If we wish to understand the art, to follow its development and the history of its aspects... then, what are needed even more than views of the ensemble of the monuments, are clear photographs of the constituent parts."

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Of the two, the figure of the Hindu-Javanese makara has been so often described and pictured that there is no necessity for a lengthy description here (Pl. 9*a, b;* 42*a, b;* 47*c*). I only wish to point out that, with a few exceptions, in Java only the bodiless head is used for ornamentation. In its classical form, as *e.g.* on the gateways of the Barabuḍur, the head shows a wide open mouth with elephant-trunk curled forward, tusks in the upper jaw, elephant's teeth and pig's or cow's ears. From the end of the trunk issues the stem of a lotus-flower from which hangs a heavy rope of pearls at whose end another lotus appears with a jewel underneath. In the open mouth usually a diminutive lion or bird is placed. Behind the slit-like eye a curved tapering horn bends downward not unlike a ram's horn. There are many variations of this standard model various of which will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter. Here I only wish to call the attention to the so-called stylized forms[6] in which the monster motif, wholly or partly, dissolves in vegetal ornament, further to those variations of the standard type which are peculiar on account of the trunk being curled backwards in stead of forwards.

As for the parvan motif, this occurs in Central Java in all cases where the kalpalatā has been applied as a decorative motif both in the horizontal ornament of the I *a* type described on page 24ff (fig. 3*a*) and in the ascendant ornament of the II *a* type (fig. 3*c*) and II *b* type (fig. 3*d*). (Only the I *b* type is not represented in Central Java). Moreover, in iconography and on decorative panels not infrequently nodes are pictured in the root stocks of more or less naturalistically sketched lotus plants, *e.g.* in those filling the *pūrṇaghaṭa*.

With regard to the above-mentioned parvan variations I may point out that many of these are not found in nature, at least not as nodes of the lotus, which no doubt is connected with the fact, noticed by Steinmann[7], that in Hindu-Javanese art the plant, which according to its way of growing should be called a lotus, has been subjected to all sorts of

[6] When in archaeological literature mention is made of 'stylized' forms, the term often confusedly is applied to two totally different things, *viz.* stylizing in the sense of simplifying the original pattern whilst preserving and accentuating the basic forms and main outline, and that of dissolving, wholly or partly, the pattern in a vegetal, mostly floral, ornament. The latter may be effected without sacrificing the most essential features of the original but mostly embellishment and complication rather than simplification is the result. To avoid confusion I shall in future call the first mentioned forms 'simplified' or 'schematized', the latter 'stylized'.

[7] A. Steinmann, "Enkele opmerkingen betreffende de plantornamenten van Mantingan" (Notes on the vegetal ornaments of M.), *Djâwâ*, XIV (1934), pp. 89 ff.; "De op de Boroboedoer afgebeelde plantenwereld" (Plants depicted on the B. reliefs), *TBG*, 74 (1934), pp. 581 ff.

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curious metamorphoses, it often being supplied with the leafage of quite different plants, *e.g.* those of the sacred fig-tree, the water-lily, the orchid and the calabash. Keeping this in mind we may safely assume that what is true of the leaves also applies to the other parts of the plant including the parvan, that is to say that these parvan forms are not merely the products of the sculptor's fancy but were borrowed from certain other plants in order to 'graft' them upon the lotus.

Parvan and makara

For our further examination of the relation between parvan and makara we start from the parvan of the natural lotus-plant (fig. 4) and then place beside it the forms of this parvan in Indian art in order to confront these with the comparable forms of the makara.

First of all we notice a parvan provided with a single scale-leaf which we already observed at Bharhut and Sānchi (fig. 4*a, b*) and which is also found on Java (fig. 4*c, d*), with this slight difference that it has acquired a more elegant shape through the scale being a little more bent and the top curved backwards, while the lower edge is dentated, obviously the remnant of the ends of the longitudinal grooves often shown on Bharhut and Sānchi parvans. To my knowledge this type of parvan is not represented among the makaras.

The case is different if we start from a double-scaled parvan, the top one being elongated, the lower one shorter, and compare it with the double-scaled Sānchi parvan (fig. 4*e*) which is also found in a somewhat more graceful shape on Java (fig. 4*f*). The resemblance to a monster-head is gradually becoming more noticeable and is unmistakable in the next stage of development when the 'lower jaw' is enlarged till it equals in lenght the 'upper jaw' (fig. 4*g-i*). In this shape the parvan is occasionally found in Indian art and frequently in Java. If this process continues fantastic designs are sometimes produced which have little in common with nature — see *e.g.* Pl. 6*a*.

With the parvanforms just described a certain type of makara corresponds which is only used in the oldest period of Indian art and is characterized by a crocodilian head and a snout curved backward. In comparing fig. 4*j-m* with fig. 4*e-i* we shall notice that the saw-teeth in the monster's upper and lower jaw correspond with the dentature of the scale-leaves, and that the curl of the snout resembles that of the upper scale-leaf.

In this connection, an interesting detail may be noticed in the relief of

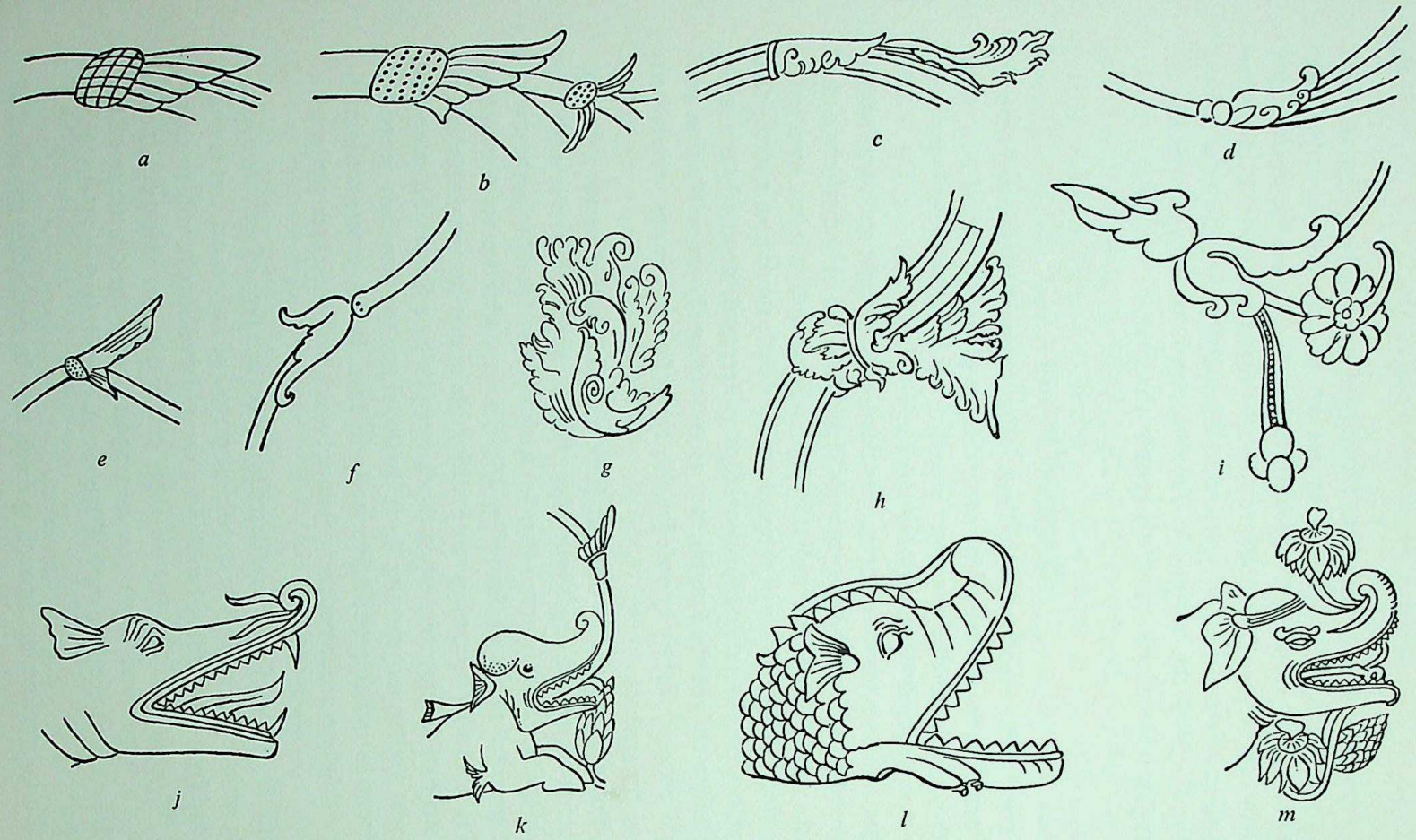

Fig. 4

Fig. 4 *a* and *b* Bharhut; *c* chaṇḍi Kalasan; *d* Barabuḍur; *e* Sānchi; *f* Barabuḍur; *g* and *h* chaṇḍi Kalasan; *i* Barabuḍur; *j* Bharhut; *k* Sānchi; *l* and *m* Bharhut.

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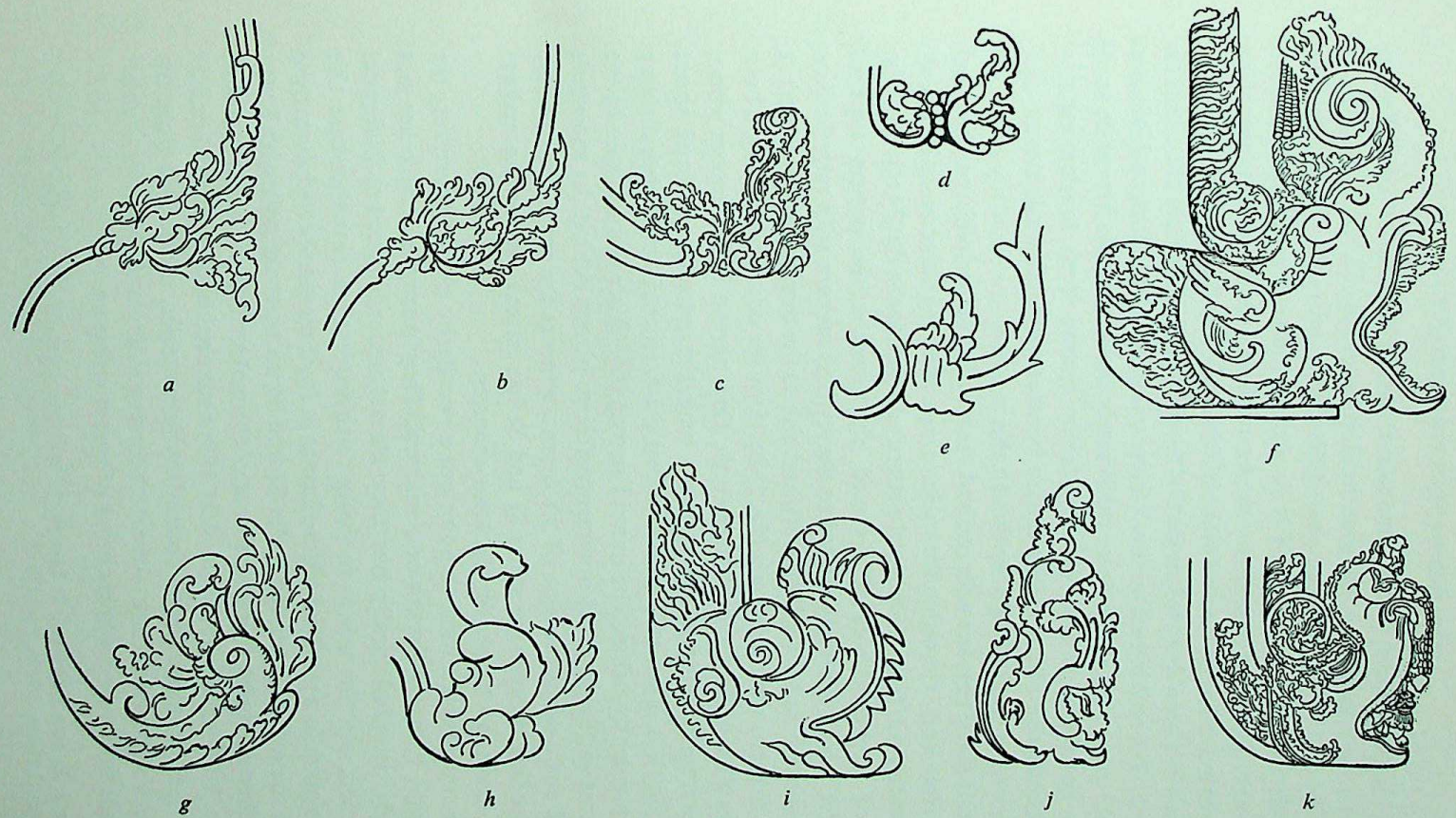

Fig. 5

Fig. 5 *a - d* Barabuḍur; *e* bronzelamp coll. Resink-Wilkens; *f* chaṇḍi Sewu; *g* and *h* Barabuḍur; *i* Diëng; *j* chaṇḍi Kalasan; *k* Barabuḍur.

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the chaṇḍi Meṇḍut (near Barabuḍur) which depicts the well-known fable of the stupid crocodile and the clever monkey (Pl. 8*d*).[8] The sculptor of this relief has placed the crocodile's head and a parvan of the type just discussed side by side as if he wished to compare them, as we did just now. The head provided with saw-teeth and curled snout is placed in the centre of the scene and right in front of it, to the spectator's left, a parvan has been depicted as part of the stalk springing from the animal's mouth. The striking resemblance between the two is evident, and it is not a bold guess that the sculptor deliberately placed the two figures in such close proximity, his purpose evidently having been to demonstrate his knowledge of the close relation between crocodile and parvan, and to draw the spectator's attention to this relation.

Besides the parvans with one and those with two scale-leaves, the most complete and interesting forms are those showing three scale-leaves. If we start again from the natural pattern and imagine in fig. 2 scale S1 to be curled backward and S2 forward, the result is the parvan type of fig. 5*h*, which is closely related to the stylized makara with retroflex jaw and snout bent forwards (fig. 5*i*), and also to the theriomorphous makara type that has similar features (fig. 5*j-k*). If, on the other hand, in fig. 2 both scales S1 and S2 are bent backwards, then parvan forms appear whose counterparts amongst the makaras have the retroflex jaw and snout (fig. 5*d-f*). It is interesting to note that the characteristic rootlets thriving so abundantly behind the natural parvan (fig. 2) are found again in the makara in the shape of ornamental foliage placed behind the monster's head and against the base of the toraṇa, whereas the small scale-leaf Sb protruding between the scales S1 and St has passed over to the makara and serves as a tongue for the water-monster.

In conclusion I want to point out a peculiarity clearly illustrating the relation between parvan and makara. They resemble each other not merely morphologically but they also share an important biological function, *viz.* the power to bring forth vegetation. In either case this takes place in a similar fashion. Just as in fig. 2 the side-branch *b* emerges from the axil between the scales S1 and St, so we see a stalk with leaves and flowers spring from the throat of the makara (fig. 4*k, m*), and just as in fig. 2 the stalk of the lotus-leaf 1f is embraced by the scales S1 and S2 and rises from the sheath formed by these scales, so we find from the makara's upraised trunk — the part corresponding with the scales — either a single flower or a whole cluster of sprays rising up.

[8] See J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "The Suṃsumāra-jātaka in Indian Art", *India Antiqua* (Leiden, 1947), pp. 235 ff.

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Although our investigation so far has been far from exhaustive, the comparison of the various parvan and makaratypes has made it sufficiently clear that the points of resemblance are so striking that we cannot dismiss them by merely attributing them to blind fate or to the fancy of the Indian artists. This statement, however, only means a negative result. If we are to arrive at positive conclusions we shall first of all have to deal with the now urgent question of how the resemblances between parvan and makara are to be explained. Has evolution played a part here, and if so, what course did it follow?

In my opinion, the most logical and plausible theory is the following:

In the second or third century before our era the strange being, called makara, originated as a hybrid product in which elements of the crocodile, the elephant, and certain Hellenistic types of marine animals were equally represented. Subsequently,the decorative motif so formed went through a process of evolution the various stages of which may be traced step by step in ancient Indian art.[9]

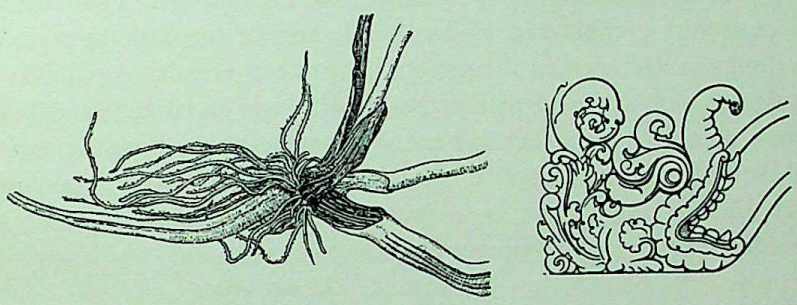

Fig. 6

The makara-motif having so made its appearance and, with various alterations and in sundry functions, once having acquired a fixed place in art, something occurred which, though important to Indian art and symbolism, cannot be regarded as being specifically Indian. Essentially it does not differ from what happens time and again and everywhere when the human imagination tends to recognise in one or other object of an undefined and fantastical form — such as a mass of clouds, a column of smoke, a vegetal growth, the bulk of a mountain — the shape of an animal-like or man-like being, to 'see' this being in it, and to invest it with an existence of its own, foreign to reality, yet made up from elements borrowed from reality.

[9] E. B. Vogler, *De monsterkop*, pp. 68-74.

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Now, just as the imagination sees *e.g.* in a mass of clouds a charging giant-like figure, in a gnarled tree trunk a ghost-like apparition, or in a fantastically shaped cluster of leaves a lion or a dragon[10], so the Indian saw in the node of the lotus-plant with its jaw-like scale-leaves a monster-head with gaping mouth (fig. 6) or, to put it more accurately, in this vegetal formation he recognized the figure of the makara-monster with which art had made him familiar. Consequently, by adopting this figure, he provided art with a motif available whenever the need arose to represent the aquatic element in an adequately symbolical figure, the figure of a legendary aquatic monster.

This identification of the parvan with the makara-motif no doubt entailed an intricate interplay of influences. For in consequence of this identification on the one hand the makara-figure was subjected to strong influences on the part of the parvan resulting in the former assuming, wholly or partly, vegetable forms, whereas on the other hand the parvan-figure was influenced by the monster-motif producing parvan-forms with distinct makara-character. As stated before, this interplay of influences has been very complicated, and it is not part of our task to trace its development. But even at the present state of our enquiry our observations justify a conclusion which in the course of our investigation will ever gain in probability: the fact that at some indefinable moment the parvan and the makara were identified has caused the makara-motif to occupy a place, and to play a part, in Indian art, the importance of which far exceeds the original purely decorative nature of the motif.

B. LOTUS-STALK AND TORAṆA-POST

The Hindu-Javanese type of makara-toraṇa

Obviously, the identification as discussed in the preceding chapter was not an isolated occurrence in Indian art. We know that in this art the makara is not only used as a separate decoration but it also occurs as part of a combination of two makara-figures, facing each other or reversed, and connected by an arch (*toraṇa)* which is usually crowned by

[10] Of the numerous examples in art and literature of this way of perceiving I only mention the well-known scene from Hamlet, II, II. Hamlet: "Do you see that cloud, that's almost in shape like a camel"? — Polonius: "By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed." — Haml.: "Methinks, it is like a weasel." — Pol.: "It is backed like a weasel". — Haml.: "Or, like a whale" ? — Pol.: "Very like a whale." Cf. also Antony and Cleopatra, IV, XII. Ant.: "Sometime we see a cloud that 's dragonish: a vapour, sometime, like a bear, or lion" etc.

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a top-piece in the shape of a monster-head (Skr. *kīrtimukha,* Jav. *kāla*). When this arch and the top became associated with the makara they had already gone through a long process of development. We shall not dwell on this process, our only object being to prove that the arch and the top shared the same fate with the makara in that they were attracted by lotus-symbolism, and once having entered this sphere of influence were identified with certain parts of the lotus-plant.

In order to demonstrate this we shall examine more closely successively the toraṇa-post and the top-piece. By doing so we shall for the moment restrict our inquiry to Java, as the material here is more abundant and more perspicuous than in any other area, even in India.

In the Hindu-Javanese toraṇa-post usually two parts must be distinguished, first an unornamented, slightly cambered post set off with two flat borders and uninterruptedly passing over into the makara-head, forming as it were the long hind part of this head, and secondly a border running along the outside of the post and composed of arabesques. (Pl. 9*a*). This part, which is usually called 'flamy border', often borders only part of the post or is altogether omitted. It does not appear to be essential.

Now, if we first look at the post actually connecting the top-piece of the toraṇa and the makara-monster, with what part of the lotus does it

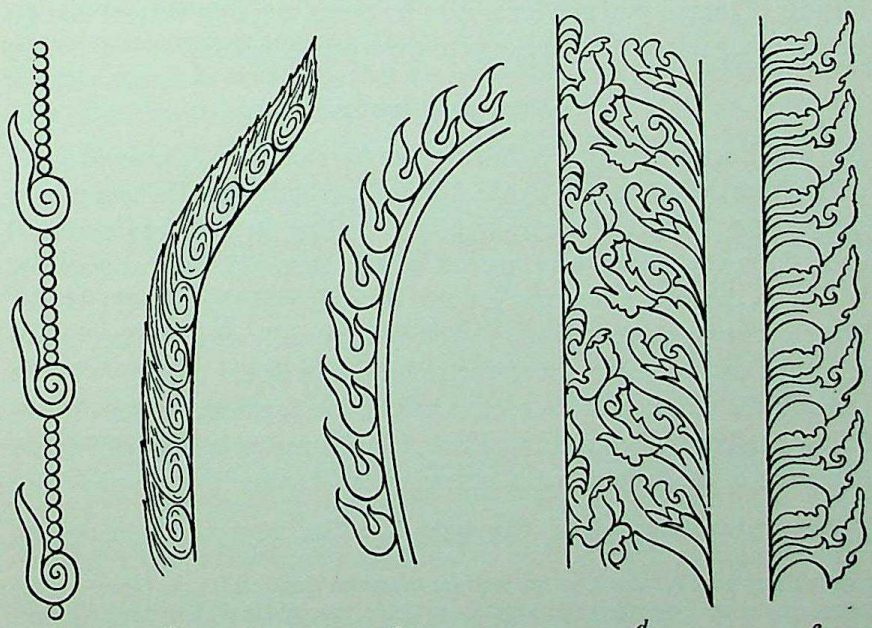

Fig. 7

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correspond? The answer is not hard to find, for if makara and parvan are identified it is obvious that the post connected with the back of the monster-head must have its counterpart in a part of the lotus likewise issuing from the back of the parvan. This part is the stalk (actually the root-stock) of the plant. Not only is it connected with the parvan in a similar manner as the post with the makara but also for its smoothness, slimness and suppleness, of which in Indian eyes it is pre-eminently the model, it is comparable with the unornamented and gracefully arched toraṇa-post.

A second point of resemblance between stem and post may be found in the above-mentioned 'flamy border'. At closer inspection of this part we observe that the figures composing this border do not represent flames, the current name therefore being incorrect. To prove this we have but to place side by side a few examples of real flamy borders that border the aureoles of statues (fig. 7*a-c*) and the pretended flamy borders of toraṇas (fig. 7*d*, *e*). It then becomes evident that, whereas the former are composed of a series of figures shaped like commas or interrogation marks showing clearly the tongues of flames,[11] the latter have a quite different appearance as they consist of arabesques with crenated edges of a distinctly vegetal character. This is exactly what our above conclusion led us to expect, for if this conclusion regarding the identity of toraṇa-post and lotus-stem is correct, it is only natural that the border along this post also belongs to the vegetal kingdom.

The Indian type of makara-toraṇa

It is well-known that the Hindu-Javanese form of toraṇa discussed so far differs from the Indian type by the striking peculiarity that the toraṇa-post merges into the back of the makara-head causing the mouth to be turned away from the direction of growth of the stem (Pl. 9*a*), whereas in Indian art the mouth is turned towards it swallowing the post (Pl. 10*a-c*). There are some exceptions to this rule but generally speaking both types of toraṇa are in constant use respectively on Java and in India.[12]

As in their choice of decorative motifs the Javanese artists used to follow obediently the Indian tradition, it is a remarkable fact that, in their treatment of the makara, when changing its direction in connection with

[11] Van Erp remarked this before (*Barabuḍur*, II, p. 272). "If we consider [he says] the manner in which in Hindu-Javanese art, *e.g.* in aureoles and on the back slabs of statues, a flamy edge is figured, we are inclined to assume that here (*i.e.*, in the case of the toraṇa-posts) we are dealing with vegetal ornament, that means with stylized foliage".

[12] Some examples of diverging makaras in Indian art are given by G. de Coral Rémusat, *RAA*, 1934, pp. 244 ff.

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the toraṇa-post, they deliberately and spontaneously departed from that tradition. This fact has already been noticed long ago by archaeologists and has given rise to various explanations.

Brandes e.g. in his well-known study on the makara as a hair-dress ornament[13] pointed out the fact that already in Amarāvatī sculpture both ends of the transversal bar of thrones are sometimes decorated with makara-heads turned outwards in Hindu-Javanese fashion, a fact which led him to surmise that the Central-Javanese type of makara was not derived from architecture, but from those thrones. This does not seem very probable, but even if Brandes' conjecture were correct, it would not solve the problem as it fails to explain why the makers of these seats, departing from tradition, should have given the makara a different direction.

Neither can we endorse Vogel's tentative explanation[14] which attributed the aesthetically so much more elegant reversion of the two heads to a more artistic sense on the part of the Hindu-Javanese sculptors. The deep reverence of the Javanese for Indian tradition and its precepts should restrain us, when dealing with such an important alteration as the one in question, from attributing considerable influence to artistic sense and suchlike notions which, in matters of religion and art, were totally irrelevant to the Javanese mind.

Finally, Mme De Coral Rémusat attempted to find a solution of the problem by tracing the reversion of the Hindu-Javanese makaras to Chinese influence operating first on Java and later in Cambodia.[15] The type of the makara, it is alleged, was borrowed from Indian art, whereas the divergence of the heads is to be traced to China where dragon's heads, facing outwards from the extremity of the arches, were customary since the Han era. We need not dwell on this theory. Apart from the question whether it is plausible for an undoubtedly homogeneous style-element like the Hindu-Javanese makara to be the result of blending two totally different styles like the Chinese and the Javanese, the writer leaves us in the dark as to the time and the place of this Chinese influence. As long as this has not been cleared up we shall do well to leave the matter in abeyance.

In the absence of a satisfactory explanation of this so-called reversion it may be asked whether the Indian type of toraṇa happens to be related to the lotus in the same manner as its Hindu-Javanese counterpart, and

13 *TBG*, 48 (1906), pp. 21 ff.
14 *NION*, VIII (1924), p. 273, and Vogler, *De monsterkop*, fig. 48.
15 "Animaux fantastiques", pp. 247 ff.

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whether the relation between the Indian and the Hindu-Javanese toraṇa would not be greatly simplified as soon as this point were elucidated.

When in this connection we review once more the development of the makara-motif we state the important fact that from the moment the monster becomes an integral part of the toraṇa, *i.e.* in the Gupta period and after, the animal's body is a variable element differing in shape and becoming stout or slender, big or small, and is often even absent as a link between head and tail, whereas the latter part of the body is always present, growing with a wealth of curls and arabesques unknown to ancient art into an element of the first magnitude. Cousens rightly observed: "The glory of the beast is in its tail. This, starting in its natural

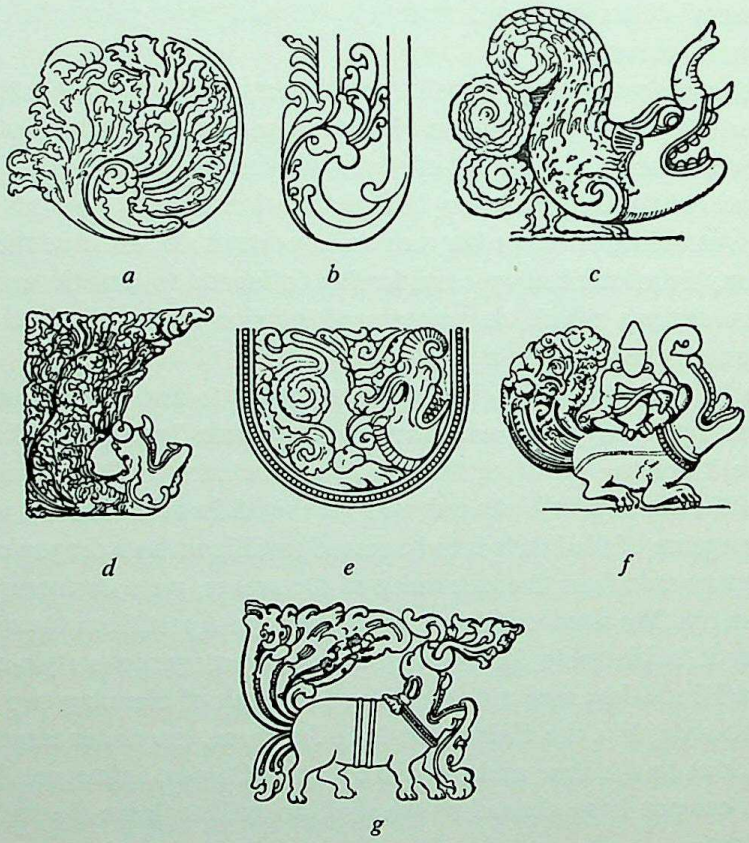

Fig. 8

place . . . curls and spreads up around and over his back and haunches, in a magnificent multiplicity of elaborate flourishes and whorls, forming a fan-like display of intricate and interlacing arabesques. In some cases the body is dwarfed into insignificance beside it".[16]

[16] *ASI-AR*, 1903-1904, p. 227.

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If we now examine us fig. 8a it will not be difficult to single out the part that served as a pattern in conceiving the Indian makara-type. Whereas with regard to the origin of the Hindu-Javanese type all our attention was claimed by the main rhizome of which the parvan is the extreme part, in the case of the Indian type we concentrate on the secundary rhizome rising from the same parvan. If we then change the parvan into a makara-head and the main rhizome into a toraṇa-post we obtain the Hindu-Javanese makara having the end of the toraṇa-post for a head and the monster's open jaws turned outward. If on the other hand we subject parvan and secundary rhizome to the same alteration the result will be an Indian makara-type with the head turned inward and the toraṇa-post emerging from the open jaws (fig. 8*b-d*).

In this metamorphosis a material part is played by the rootlets round the base of the parvan which spread backwards in a large flamboyant cluster (fig. 2). We have already seen these rootlets being subjected to a metamorphosis, *viz.* in connection with the origin of the Hindu-Javanese makara, and so we are not surprised to notice something similar in the creation of the Indian makara-head. In the latter case, however, the rootlets do not change into an ornamental design but into the makara's tail (fig. 8*c-g*). From this we may conclude that the trunkless type of the Indian makara, *i.e.* the animal showing the tail joined to the head without any link (fig. 8*c-e*), represents its oldest and most original form, and that the insertion of the trunk with accessory parts came about when the unnatural conception of an animal with head and tail but without a body began to give offence.

After this digression we need not dwell much longer on the relation between the Indian and the Hindu-Javanese toraṇa. If the proposed explanation is correct, it is obvious that neither the one form was derived from the other nor that there ever has been a 'reversion' but that both types are equivalent descendants of one and the same vegetal ancestor. The only thing needed was that this original plant should develop in two directions and so give birth to both the Indian and the Hindu-Javanese type of makara-toraṇa.

C. PADMAMŪLA AND KĀLA

The kāla-motif

It is now time to start a discussion on the third part of the makara toraṇa, the top-piece. This is so closely connected with the other parts of

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the toraṇa and occupies such a dominant place that no explanation can be complete that does not deal with this part. We shall start again from Java, more particularly from Central-Javanese art, which is so well defined as to time and area. First of all, we shall consider the most current form of top-piece, the lion's head or kāla-motif (Pl. 9*a, b*).[17]

Our object being to trace the vegetal affinities of the kāla, we shall be well advised to mark especially the parts with vegetal characteristics. In the first place I mention here the tree-like element implanted over the root of the nose (Pl. 9*a, b;* 11*a-c;* 12*a*), and mostly rising from a triangular ornament to be found there. It consists of a stem swelling upwards into a jewel or a bulb-shaped mass, occasionally into a series of such bulbs, surmounted by a leafy top, a lotus flower or a sunshade. On either side of the stem strongly stylized branches spread upwards fan-wise or form spirals winding downwards or upwards in the same manner as with the wishing-tree which we shall discuss later.

This tree-like element is divided by a narrow space from, or merges uninterruptedly into, a second element of a distinctly vegetal nature, *viz.* the eyebrows represented by a single leaf or a bundle of leaves. The position of these may vary and so may the manner in which they are joined to the eyes. If the position is practically vertical horn-shaped excrescences appear on the head (Pl. 9*b*) but these are absent when the brows are more horizontal (Pl. 11*c*).

The lower half of the head, with rare exceptions, is without a lower jaw and the face consists of two parts corresponding with cheeks and upper lip divided by a brace-shaped line which is interrupted by the nose. The shape of the cheeks in particular betrays its vegetal character. It is common occurrence for the cheeks, or rather the cheek-bones, to become more or less elongated thereby forming a set of tentacle- or tendril-shaped projections (Pl. 11*a*) which not unfrequently are to be seen em-

[17] On the lionhead motif (called *kāla* in its Central-Javanese and *banaspati* in its East-Javanese form, and known among Indian archaeologists as *kīrtimukha* or *siṃha-mukha*) see Gangoly, "A note on kīrtimukha being the life-hist. of an Ind. architectural ornament", *Rupam*, I (1920), pp. 11 ff.; J. Ph. Vogel, *NION*, VIII (1924), p. 272; J. H. F. Kohlbrugge, *Tier- und Menschenantlitz als Abwehrzauber* (1926); L. Bachhofer, *Early Ind. Sculpture* (1929), Pl. 129; W. F. Stutterheim, "The meaning of the kāla-makara ornament", *IAL*, n.s., III (1929); Van Erp, *Barabuḍur*, II, pp. 149, 178, 197, 212, 379, 398 ff.; Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, II, p. 48; G. de Coral Rémusat, "Influences javanaises dans l'art de Rolûoḥ", *JA*, 1933, p. 190; id., "De l'origine commune des linteaux de l'Inde Pallava et des linteaux khmers préangkoriens", *RAA*, VIII (1934), p. 245; id., "Animaux fantastiques", *BEFEO*, XXXVI (1936), p. 427; id., *L'art khmer* (1940), p. 48; Ph. Stern, "Évolution du linteau khmer", *RAA*, VIII (1934), p. 251; H. Marchal, "The Head of the Monster", *JISOA*, VI (1938); G. Combaz, *Masques et Dragons en Asie* (1945).

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bracing the posts winding round them and reappearing in front of them (Pl. 12*a-b*). Here they sometimes acquire a new shape, adapted to the animal aspect of the lion-head, and appear as claws.

If, finally, we observe the numerous specimens of the kāla-head with teeth transformed into leaves and lotus-buds and flowers hanging from the monster's mouth (Pl. 9*a*, *b*; 11*b*), we may conclude that all parts of the head are in a state of unstable equilibrium, oscillating between a vegetal and an animal form of appearance, and showing the same tendency to be stylized and de-stylized as we noticed in the case of the makara.

Besides the monster-head some other motifs for crowning the toraṇa were current in Central Java. First of all, there is the motif frequently found on the back of the Barabuḍur gateways. It consists of a jewel-shaped central part open at the top and enveloped in a thick skin or shell from the base of which the two posts of the toraṇa are emitted. The whole motif is surrounded by stylized sprouts and foliage emerging both from the top and the base of the figure (Pl. 12*c*).

Closely related to this type of top, though more stylized and consequently not revealing its vegetal character so distinctly, is the antefix-like piece which often replaces the monster-head on the relief pictures of buildings on the Barabuḍur and on the actual Central-Javanese monuments (Pl. 12*d*). It consists of a central part in the shape of a jewel, or an upright oval, or occasionally a rectangle, surmounted by a tree-like growth, and resting on two or three creepers emerging from the base of the central figure and stretched one atop of the other.

The padmamūla

So much for our discussion of the various types of toraṇa top-pieces in Central-Javanese art.

Proceeding to the question whether the lotus possesses an organ occupying the same place and acting in a similar function with regard to the other parts of the plant as the top-piece does with respect to the other constituent parts of the toraṇa, it is obvious that, starting from the parvan, we shall have to follow the lotus-stem in order to reach its point of origin. For if we have been right in assuming a close relationship between parvan and makara on the one hand and lotus-stem and toraṇa-post on the other, then, obviously, the top-piece of the toraṇa from which the posts are produced must find its counterpart in the organ from which the stem springs.

How then, we ask, is this organ represented in Indian art?

When dealing with the kalpalatā-ornament of the Barabuḍur we

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noticed already that the stem winding upwards is usually represented as rising from a figure placed at the base of the relief which may be a human being or an animal or some other emblem, such as a vase, a conch or a jewel, but in the same place we also find, no less than seventy-six times, a purely vegetal formation. It is the main organ of the lotus-plant, the root (Skr. *padmamūla*),[18] with which we are here confronted for the first time.

Apart from the Barabuḍur, this root occurs in the reliefs of many other monuments, not only in the ornament of the II*b* type, but also in that of the I*a* type (see supra p. 24). Moreover, it occurs in all cases where lotus-vegetation, stylized or not, is seen to grow from the natural root.

As Pls. 13-16 show, various forms of the mūla have been current in India, on Java, and elsewhere, the most prevailing being the jewel-shaped (Pl. 14*a, b;* 15*b*; 16*a, c*). This mostly is symmetrically formed, smooth and solid on the outside, but not infrequently also it is seen in cross-section showing the interior consisting of a kernel, also jewel-shaped, and enveloped in a thick skin or shell (Pl. 14*b*).

This symmetrical type gave birth to a number of variations, *e.g.* the specimen with deeply indented sides serving as the central part of a modern piece of Balinese wood-carving (Pl. 14*c*). The most prevalent variation, however, is the asymmetric type shaped like a reversed heart, the top of which diverges slightly from the axis and is often decorated with foliage curled over downward. Sometimes this foliage serves as a base for a bundle of shoots rising straight upwards and curling over backwards (Pl. 15*a*), all in the manner of the makara-type of fig. 2*c*.

Closely related to this variation is the pear-shaped one of Pl. 16*d*, which is open at the top to allow a passage for the stem rising from the mūla's bottom.

Moreover, there is a group of mūla types whose connection with the jewel-shaped is less distinct. The basic form of these is a lotus flower-like formation consisting of a double corolla, the upper half standing up, the lower one hanging down, separated from each other by a constriction and being exact counterparts (Pl. 13*a-c*; 37*a*). We shall deal with this type

[18] This name is taken from R. Schmidt, "Der Lotus in der Sanskrit-literatur", *ZDMG*, LXVII (1913), p. 462. — Here and in future I keep to the Indian custom of calling the organ in question *mūla*, i.e. 'root', although botanically it rather corresponds with a tuberiform thickening of the rhizome. It is worthy of note that this mūla is not an organ of the common lotus *(Nelumbium Nelumbo)* but of the Nymphaea-lotus *(Nelumbium speciosum)* which gives reason to assume that, just as with the leaves borrowing from other plants took place (see p. 28), so in the present case another plant, *viz.* the water-lily, supplied the lotus with its own organ.

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more extensively on a later occasion, but I may now mention already that many of the mūla-forms discussed here strongly resemble, often even are identical with, certain parvan-types.

Padmamūla and toraṇa top-piece

Sufficient data are now available to answer the question whether the padmamūla which, according to its place and function in the lotus-organism, is the equivalent of the top-piece may be identified with this piece also on account of its exterior qualities.

The answer is in the affirmative in cases where the Barabuḍur motif serves as a toraṇa-top. If we compare the specimen of this motif as shown in Pl. 12*c*, with the lotus-root in its natural state in Pl. 13-16 the striking resemblance is evident. We may rather call it an identity as in these cases apparently no particular form of top-piece was invented, the padmamūla being simply transferred to the toraṇa-top.

Matters are a little more complicated in the case of the top which we called the antefixal one, and which presumably is the result of a more or less advanced schematising of the Barabuḍur-motif, the central portion usually retaining its round, oval or heart shape but frequently taking on the shape of a square, a rectangle or a diamond (Pl. 12*d*). The original vegetal nature of the antefix therefore may sometimes seem doubtful, all the same the winding creepers at the base and the tree-like growth on the top clearly show the close relation of the antefix both with the Barabuḍur motif and with the padmamūla.

If, in conclusion, we wish to establish a relation between the kāla-head top and the padmamūla, we are well aware that the gap is much wider than in the case of the Barabuḍur-motif or the antefix, at least in Western eyes, which, unlike Indian eyes, are not accustomed to recognize animal shapes in plants, and conversely. But closer comparison will reveal even to us that the padmamūla and the kāla-head have certain elements in common and that this leads to a more or less striking similarity of form which may help us to understand the transition from the vegetal organ to the theriomorphous motif, and vice versa.

In support of this view I refer to the stages of development shown in fig. 9*a-c*.

So far as these figures do not speak for themselves, I may point out that the jewel-shaped central part, which in *a* has a purely vegetal appearance, in *b* has assumed a shape from which the kāla nose in *c* originated. Further, the kalpataru-like growth on the top of the mūla in *a-b* has been almost bodily transferred to the nose of the monster-head in

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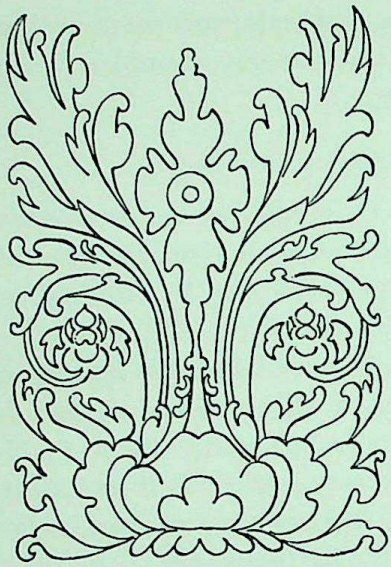
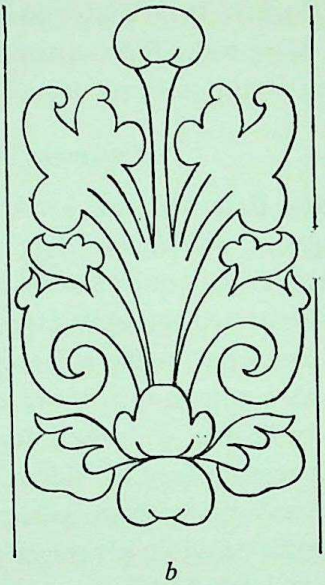


a



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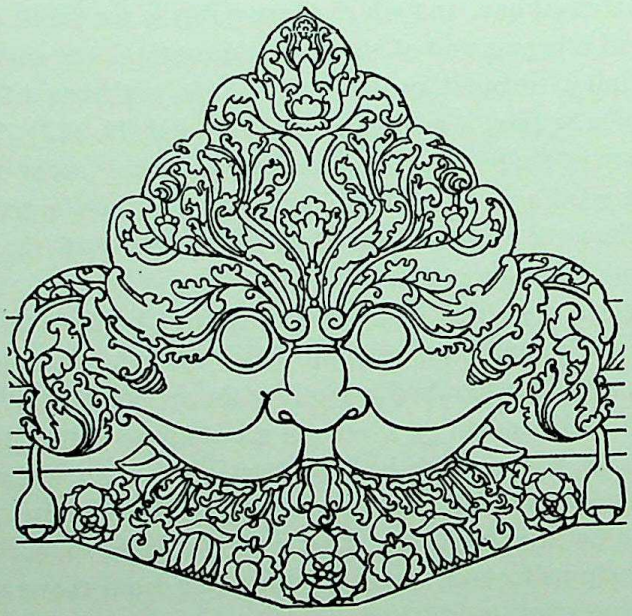

c

Fig. 9

c, while the spirally curled creepers on either side of it have also been transplanted to the head so as to provide it with a pair of eyes and arched brows *(c)*.

Now, if we wish to see clearly what is the place of the kāla amongst the other constituent parts of the toraṇa when these have been converted

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into lotus-organs, we may imagine both spiral scrolls issuing from the centre in Pl. 14*a* to be curved downward so that the two parvans which appear half-way up the stems will form the lowermost points. The vegetal prototype of the kāla-makara-toraṇa now stands out clearly before us: the jewel-shaped padmamūla occupies the place of the kāla-head, the two stems have their equivalents in the toraṇa-posts and, finally, the two parvans find their counterparts in the extremities of these posts, the makara-heads.

One important point needs to be added. Our interpretation of the relief in Pl. 14*a* was based on the assumption that it represents the lotus-plant extending in a vertical plane. If, however, we take into account that the jewel-shaped centre actually represents not a two- but a three-dimensional object, then there is every reason to assume that the three-dimensional conception applies not only to this part but also to the surrounding vegetation; in other words, apart from interpreting the relief as a flat design, there is room for viewing the mūla as emitting side-shoots in four directions, two of which coincide with the relief's plane and are visible, and two are at right angles with it and remain invisible to the spectator.

This distinction of the vegetation according to its being two- or three-dimensional will occupy us frequently at a later stage of our investigation when we shall have to examine the symbolical equivalents of the representations of plants and trees.

If, in conclusion, we draw a parallel between the relation of mūla and kāla on the one hand, and of parvan and makara on the other, we shall find points both of resemblance and of difference.

Both relations correspond in so far as the superficial resemblance between a vegetal organ and a monster-head led to an identification of the two, this resemblance afterwards being stressed and strengthened by the artists who felt a strong inclination to equalize partly or wholly the two objects and to make the one merge into the other. Consequently the monster-head in either case is a more or less unstable entity as each of its parts and all of its parts together are apt to dissolve themselves into vegetal motifs, just as the vegetal organ is liable to assume a theriomorphous shape and so to obtain the nature of a monster-head.

Besides these points of resemblance there are, however, some more or less substantial differences. The chief one, no doubt, is that whereas the makara is a product of the imagination, the lion's head, the prototype of kīrtimukha and kāla, belongs to the world of reality and so afforded far

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less scope to the artist's fancy than was the case with the makara. In this connection we should not forget that most Indians did not know the lion in its natural state and were aware of its existence only through literature and by the lion-head motif which, originating in the opening centuries of our era under Hellenistic influence, spread from the north-west over various Indian centres of art and came to be used as an ornament on medals, pillar shafts, coping stones and such like.[19] We do not know when exactly this time honoured lion-head-motif became firmly established as a toraṇa-top, and it is not our purpose to go into this question now. This much is certain, however, that in the case of the lion's head the same statement holds true as that which we made on the makara: the fact that at some indefinable moment the padmamūla and the lion's head were identified was the cause of the latter acquiring a place and a function in Indian art and symbolism which far surpassed the original purely decorative character of the motif.

D. WRITTEN RECORDS

Widening our horizon

So far, we have not dealt with the question whether the kāla-makara-toraṇa as analysed by us had for the Indian more than a purely aesthetic and decorative significance, that is to say, whether possibly he used these forms as a particular language not just made up of sounds but having a distinct meaning and being the means of conveying certain notions from the one individual to the other.

We cannot evade this question if we wish to succeed in our further inquiry. If our foregoing examination warrants a conclusion it would be that, although not strictly proven, it is highly probable that the Indian,

[19] On the matter of this lion's head, see L. Bachhofer, *Early Ind. Sculpture*, fig. 129; A. von le Coq, *Bilderatlas zur Kunst u. Kunstgesch. Mittelasiens*, p. 94; Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, II, pp. 48 ff.; Van Erp, *Barabuḍur*, II, p. 399; G. de Coral Rémusat, "Animaux fantastiques", pp. 432 ff.; "Linteaux indiens et khmers", p. 246. — In the last-mentioned study the author refers to the Chinese *t'ao t'ie* from the Chou era and its derivations in the Han and T'ang period, which are all characterized by the absence of the lower jaw, a pair of horn-shaped brows and two claws beside the head. According to her, the Hellenistic lion-head motif and the Chinese *t'ao t'ie* — both of which probably will appear to have the same origin — met somewhere in South Asia (South India or Indonesia) in the 7th or 8th century, and merged into one motif the variations of which in many ways are related to the Hellenistic lion-head and the Chinese *t'ao t'ie*. — Recently, E. B. Vogler made the lion-head motif the subject of a thorough study in his book *De monsterkop in de Hindoe-Javaanse bouwkunst* (The monsterhead in H.-J. architecture).

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seeing monster-heads in the main organs of the lotus and assigning to these heads, separately or jointly, a conspicuous place in art, was not prompted by the desire to meet a demand for decorative designs, or to let his imagination have its way, but because these motifs had a certain meaning and voiced a certain purpose. And just as this meaning guided the Indian in designing, applying, combining, and varying these motifs so it will have to direct our steps if we wish to explore the world of living and creative thought from which Indian art drew its inspiration.

Now, study of the written records so far has been considered the safest road leading into this world. Senart expressed this clearly and after him many have echoed his view: "C'est de la légende, c'est des textes qu'il faut partir pour entendre les monuments."[20]

Acting upon this advice, however, our first experience is most disappointing. The strange thing is — and later on we shall endeavour to find an explanation for it — that although Indian literature abounds with descriptions and comparisons with regard to the leaves, buds, flowers and stalks of the lotus-plant, it is mysteriously reticent on the matter of the organs which, as we have seen before, more than any other parts of the plant, are the exponents of symbolism. These are the submerged parts of the lotus, the rhizome with its padmamūla and parvan.

The mere establishment of this fact, however, does not satisfy us. Since sculptural art has drawn our attention to the said parts and their significance to symbolism has become apparent, we may expect literature to respond somehow to the clear voice of art. In this anticipation we shall not be deceived. Art having put us on the right trail, on closer investigation we shall find again in various myths, legends and tales the conceptions revealed to us by art, and moreover, these conceptions will appear to be clad in a form which will enable us to penetrate into their deeper meaning.

So on the one hand the reticence of the written records will give way to communicativeness as often as they are brought into contact with art so that, reversing Senart's words, we may say that starting from art will lead us to an understanding of the texts. On the other hand, the written records, if correctly interpreted, will greatly help us to reveal the real, *i.e.* the deeper and symbolical, meaning of the works of art.

In order to enlist this interplay between art and literature for our examination it will be of great service to find a starting-point which is common to both and is closely related to our subject as well. This is to be

[20] *Essai sur la légende du Bouddha*, p. 356.

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found in the relief scenes with kalpalatā ornament at Bharhut and Sānchi the parvan forms of which we have discussed before.

Links between art and literature

In the left-hand corner of the Bharhut relief in Pl. 4*a* we notice a kneeling elephant from whose mouth issues a cluster of lotus-sprays. The latter is enfolded and lifted up by the animal's trunk and ends in a cluster of cup-shaped leaves from which descend a number of garments, bracelets, ropes of pearls and breast ornaments. Besides this cluster, the main stem of the lotus originates from the elephant's mouth, meandering across the relief and by means of up- and downward curves forming a frame for a series of scenes succeeding each other from left to right. Among these we notice large-sized fruits and flowers, various animals, and cup-shaped clusters of the kind just mentioned, from which garments and all sorts of treasures are pouring down. Finally, there are scenes showing men and animals recognizable as jātakas (Pl. 4*b*, *c*).

The word 'frame' I used just now actually does not adequately describe the relation between the lotus-stem and the scenes in question. Closer inspection reveals that not only the treasures descending from the cup-shaped leaves but also the flowers and the fruits, and occasionally the animal figures, too, are connected with the main stem by means of one or more thin stalks originating from a parvan. Further, it is most remarkable that some of the narrative scenes are connected with the main stem as well. Such for instance is the case with the scene in Pl. 4*b* representing a man and a woman going across a narrow bridge and holding onto a pair of cords fastened to either side of the lotus-stem. In Pl. 4*c* the stem plays even a more important part in the action. In the left-hand corner of the first scene we here see a woman occupied with cutting a sheaf of corn rising from an open parvan facing her.

The figures from which the main lotus-stem is produced are more varied in the Sānchi than in the Bharhut reliefs. In the latter we usually find a kneeling elephant whereas in the former we often meet a deformed or dwarfish human figure, a yaksha, emitting the stem from his mouth or navel (cp. Pl. 5*a*, *b*), moreover various animal figures, *e.g.* the makara, the elephant, the *jalebha*, and also emblems as the vase and the conch. Of special importance is the fact that both at Sānchi and Bharhut the side-branches springing at regular intervals from the main stem produce all kinds of vegetation varying from stylized lotus-flowers (Pl. 2*c*) to a luxuriant vegetation of leaves, buds, flowers and stalks in which aquatic birds nest (Pl. 2*a*). Curiously enough, this world of plants and animals

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sometimes harbours human figures (Pl. 2*b*) while in the same surroundings we encounter the cup-shaped lotus-leaves that we met at Bharhut from which here, too, emerge strings of jewels and other treasures.

Vastly different but none the less interesting is the symmetrical ornament shown in Pl. *5a, b*. In the right and left-hand corner of the pane we observe a yaksha-figure from whose mouth a lotus-stem is produced. Both yakshas produce vegetation not only from the mouth but also from the navel while with one hand they carry before them a heavy string of jewels, the other hand holding the stem at the point where there is a node. From the node of either stem there emerges the upper part of a male person, a yaksha, carrying in either hand a string of pearls and producing a bunch of lotus buds and flowers from the mouth. Something similar issues from the second node, only here the right hand figure is that of a woman, the left one that of a man, both being adorned with jewels and a diadem as insignia of high birth and princely rank.

From these examples it becomes sufficiently clear that the role played by the lotus-stem in the Bharhut and Sānchi reliefs is not quite so insignificant as was generally supposed up to now, *viz.* a role that would mean little more than being a decorative motif of sculptural art and forming a frame for a series of relief-scenes. There is strong evidence that these reliefs voice the idea that everything inside the convolutions of the lotus-stem — plants, animals, human beings, the riches of the earth, human activities, moreover, the regal insignia and the regal power itself — spring from and exist by the energy pouring out from the parvans and that, consequently, the faculty of bestowing life, fertility and wealth is attributed to the lotus-plant and its vital points.

In this connection we might consider once more the roll-garlands supported by male figures at Amarāvatī, the double-headed makaras of which we discussed before (Pl. 7*c*).

In other curves of the garlands these makaras are absent and are replaced alternately by round and square panels ornamented with relief-scenes (Pl. 5*c*). In the downward curves of the garland on each of these panels, just as on the top of the makara-heads in Pl. 7*c*, one or other sacred emblem or figure is placed. In Pl. 5*c* they represent the Buddha on Muchilinda, a bodhi-tree with vedi, a throne with stambha and chakra, and a stūpa, elsewhere we also meet with dancing figures, mythical animals, and so on, all with their attendants and admirers.

In accordance with our observations at Bharhut and Sānchi it is not too bold now to assume that the scenes just mentioned, both the free

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standing ones and those on the panels, were considered in the Indian mind as being produced and nurtured by the mystical vital energy conveyed by the lotus-stem — or, in our case, the garland — and pouring out through the parvans.

This brings us face to face with the question: what is this mystic vitality so closely related to the lotus-plant? Was its existence revealed by Buddhism and is it only Buddhist art that gave expression to it? Or should we assume that elsewhere and in other periods, too, this same vital energy manifested itself, both in written records and in the language of art?

For the answer to these questions we shall now have to turn to the written records, in the first place to the principal and most ancient ones which have dealt with the great problem of life and its paramount significance to mankind: the Vedas.

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II

THE GOLDEN GERM

The principle of life in the Vedas

The Indian conceptions of the origin of life have of old been dominated by the belief in dual forces in nature, opposite in every respect and maintaining this complete contrast throughout eternity: the one, the male element, appearing as the creative breath, omnipresent, all-pervading and composed of pure light and intelligence; the other, the female element, being embodied in the lightless, chaotic, inert mass of the primeval waters. Left to its own resources either of these elements is barren, lacks creative power. They are like the lame and the blind to whom purusha and prakṛiti in the Sāṃkhya system are likened. Not till they unite, till creative breath enters the waters, does the great mystery become a fact. At that moment and at that point Life, Hiraṇyagarbha, 'the Golden Germ', that is to be the beginning and origin of all creation, is born.

Already in the oldest Vedic accounts of the creation these conceptions are latent. In the famous Ṛigveda hymn X 129 (Nāsadīya-sūkta) they are the background of the picture which the prophetic bard, full of awe and reverence and often expressing himself in deliberately obscure language, draws of his vision of the primordial world shrouded in chaos and covered by the primeval waters.

1) There was then neither non-being, nor being; there was no atmosphere, nor sky which is beyond it. What was concealed? Wherein? In whose protection? Was it the deep unfathomable water?

2) Death then existed not, nor immortality; there was no distinction of day and night. By its inherent force the One breathed breathless; no other thing than that beyond existed.

3) Darkness there was at first, enveloped in darkness; without distinctive marks this all was water. That which was void and wrapped in a husk, that One by the power of heat *(tapas)* came into being.

In this hymn the first of the above mentioned cosmic elements is

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referred to as 'the One', the same name used by the Upanishads for the brahman notion (cf. RV I, 164, 46: What poets call manifold is only One") and it is said to breathe of its own free will *(svadhayā*, cf. the *svayambhū* of the later brahman notion). According to verse 3 the other element is thought to be embodied in the obscure and lifeless mass of the waters. The union of those elements, not expressly mentioned but inferable from the context in verse 3, is said to give birth to life enclosed in a shell *(tuchya)*. This germ, too, is called the One *(tadekam)* and so is virtually one with the primordial creative breath.

Whereas RV X 129 is still shrouded in mystery giving no hint as to the nature of the process of creation, other, probably more recent, legends gradually gain in distinctness. For our enquiry we are chiefly interested in the three principal forces connected with creation, *viz.* creative breath, primeval waters, and the principle of life.

The first we meet already in RV 121 as Prajāpati, Lord of creation (elsewhere, RV XI 81 and 82, as Viśvakarman, Śat. Br. VII 4, 2, 5: Viśvakarman is Prajāpati) and thus personified it will be assigned a permanent part as the world's creator, a predecessor of the god Brahmā.

On the other hand, the waters for a long time retain their original character of a primeval element, obscure, chaotic, unimaginable as a definite shape or person. "Primitive man", Rönnow rightly observes,[1] "does not visualize a constant personification of water. This is sacred and filled with *mana* in its own right. Occasionally, now one now another kind of animal or suchlike may appear as representing the innate power of the waters and so by and by a symbol appears that gains in permanence. As a rule it is the aquatic animals like fishes, dolphins, crocodiles, water snakes and so on which incorporate and represent these primitive water demons."

In a subsequent part of this study we shall have to deal repeatedly with these and many other representatives of the aquatic element. For the present I only wish to point out a group of cosmogonic legends in which the water is not symbolised by an animal but by an abstract notion, *viz.* Vāch, the female Logos, wisdom revealed, as contrasted with sensuous cognition ordered by the intellect. In these legends Vāch is called, or identified with, the mother or the daughter of the waters and just as the aquatic element is said to permeate all creation, so the same is said with respect to Vāch.

On the subject of the waters, cf. Mbh. XII, 6805: For the preservation of all creatures water was first produced—water which is the breath of all creatures, by which they grow and forsaken by which they die; by it all things are covered. The earth, the mountains, the clouds, and other material objects, all these things must be understood as aqueous *(vāruṇam)*, because the waters supported

[1] *Trita Āptya, Eine Vedische Gottheit* (1927), p. 6.

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them. Chānd. Up. VII, 10,1: This water on assuming different forms, becomes this earth, this sky, this heaven, the mountains, gods and men, cattle, birds, herbs and trees, all beasts down to worms, midges, and ants. Ait. Ār. VI, 8,1: All this was water. This water was the root, yonder world was the sprout.

And on Vāch: RV. X, 125,3: .... the gods have separated me into many portions, have assigned me many abodes, and made me widely pervading ....; 6: I pervade the sky and the earth; 7: my cradle is in the waters of the ocean; thence I divide myself in all creatures and, mightly growing, reach up to heaven. Śat. Br. VI, 1, 1, 9: He (Prajāpati) created the waters from the world of Vāch. Vāch belonged to him. It was created. It pervaded all this. Because it pervaded all this which exists, it (Vāch) was called waters *(āpaḥ)*. Pañchav. Br. XX, 14, 2: Prajāpati alone was this universe. He had Vāch as his own, as a second to him. He considered, 'Let me send forth this Vāch. She will traverse and pervade all this'. He sent her forth; she traversed and pervaded all this; she extended aloft, continuous like a stream of water. Śat. Br. VII, 5, 2, 21: Vāch is the unborn. It was from Vāch that Viśvakarman produced creatures. Śat. Br. VIII, 1, 2, 9: All this was created by Vāch, and all that existed was Vāch.

Besides this there is the idea that just as the waters are the foundation *(pratishṭhā)* of the universe (Śat. Br. VI 7, 1, 17: the worlds are based upon the waters), so Vāch, the Word, embodied in a sacred document or in magical formulae or syllables, appears as the sustainer of the universe. So *e.g.* Śat. Br. VI 1, 1, 8: This male (purusha) Prajāpati desired, may I be multiplied, may I be developed. Having toiled and performed austerity, he first created the Veda, the triple science. It became to him a foundation *(pratishṭhā)* .... Resting on this foundation, he performed austerity. He created the waters from the world of Vāch *(i.e.* the Veda).

In later mythology Vāch is identified with Sarasvatī, wife of Brahmā and goddess of wisdom and eloquence, but already in the Brāhmaṇas she appears as śakti of Prajāpati, Brahmā's predecessor, by whom she is impregnated and to whom she bears the first living creature or creatures. Kāṭhaka, XII, 5: Prajāpati was this universe. Vāch was a second to him. He associated sexually with her. She became pregnant. She departed from him. She produced these creatures. Śat. Br., VI, 1, 1, 10: .... with this triple science he (Prajāpati) entered the waters (which in vs. 8 were identified with Vāch). Thence arose an egg.

Later on it will become apparent that in Indian symbolism an important part is played by the ancient identification of the aquatic element with Vāch as embodied in the spoken or written language, the revealed wisdom, or the doctrine preached by a seer.

As to the third principle, the origin of life, it will be seen gradually to take on more definite forms after having first been referred to as something altogheter obscure (see above RV X 129). RV X 82, 5 calls it *garbha,* meaning 'germ', 'embryo' or 'womb', and X 121 for the first time uses the term Hiraṇyagarbha, 'the golden germ' or 'the golden womb'. As in X 129 so in this hymn the waters are referred to as the primordial element in which the male element, called 'the One', pene-

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trates in order to beget the germ of life Hiraṇyagarbha. The One is the great unknown after whose identity the poet at the end of each strophe inquires until the final strophe reveals his name, Prajāpati, to him.

The main stanzas of this hymn are as follows:

1. The Golden Germ (Hiraṇygarbha) arose in the beginning; born, He was the One lord of (every) creature. He supported the earth and the heaven, — to what god shall we offer our oblations?

2. He who gives breath, who gives strength, to whose command the gods all render hommage, whose shadow is immortality, and also death — to what god etc.?

3. Who by his might alone became the sole king of the breathing world, who is the lord of the two-footed and four-footed (creatures) — to what god etc.?

7. When the great waters pervaded the universe, containing a germ *(garbhaṃ)*, then He arose, the One vital spirit *(asu)* of the gods — to what god etc.?

8. Who overlooked the waters in his might, as they contained power and generated sacrifice, the only God supreme above the gods — to what god etc.?

10. Prajāpati, no other than Thou is lord over all created things. May we obtain that through desire of which we have invoked Thee. May we become the lords of all good things.

The same principle of life is mentioned AV IV, 2, 8: In the beginning the waters, producing a youngling *(vatsaṃ)*, brought forth a germ *(garbhaṃ)*, which, as it was coming to life, was enveloped in a golden covering *(ulbaḥ hiraṇyayaḥ)*.

Also AV X, 2:

28 . . . He who knows the city of Brahman from which Purusha is named;

29. who knows that city of Brahman, invested with immortality . . .

31. within that impregnable city of the gods *(devānām pūr ayodhyā)* . . . there exists a golden receptacle *(hiraṇyayaḥ kośaḥ)*, celestial, invested with light.

32. Those acquainted with Brahman know that living being *(yakshaṃ ātmanvat)* which resides in this golden receptacle.

33. Brahman has entered into this impregnable golden city, resplendent, bright, invested with glory.

The above-mentioned group of traditions express the belief that the germ of life sprang from the union of the male and the female element,

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but of old there has been a different conception marked by the absence of any sexual element. The waters are here identified with a sexless primeval being from whose navel, considered to be the germ of life Hiraṇyagarbha, rises the trunk of the cosmic tree, this trunk being both the axis of the universe and the prop of the firmament.

So RV X 82:

5. That which is beyond the sky, beyond the earth, beyond all the gods — what earliest germ *(prathamaṃ garbhaṃ)* did the waters contain, in which all the gods were beheld?

6. The waters contained that earliest germ in which all the gods came together. In the navel of the unborn the One was implanted in which all beings stood.

Likewise AV X, 7, 38: The Great Being *(mahad yakshaṃ)*, in the midst of the universe, absorbed in concentrated energy *(tapas)*, on the surface of the waters, therein [*viz.* in Skambha, the World Pillar, to which this hymn is devoted] are set whatever gods there be, like the branches of a tree around the trunk.

The principle of life in later cosmogonic notions

In the later cosmogonic legends the germ of life has three aspects: the grain of seed from which springs the tree of life; a being belonging to the animal kingdom (a cosmic egg, a tortoise); and the navel of a deity. Frequently a combination of these three motifs is to be found.

Bhāg. Pur. III, 20, 14 ff.: The elements being separately unable to create, deposited, when united by the action of destiny, a golden egg formed by the elements. This egg-shell lay lifeless on the waters of the ocean. The Lord (Iśvara) dwelt in it for a complete [period of a] thousand years. From his navel sprang a lotus splendid as a thousand suns, the abode of all living things, where Svarāṭ (Brahmā) himself was born.

Manu I, 5 ff.: This universe was enveloped in darkness, unperceived, undistinguishable, undiscoverable, unknowable, as it were entirely sunk in sleep. Then the unmanifested self-existent Lord *(svayambhūr bhagavān avyakto)*, causing this universe with the five elements and all other things to become discernible, was manifested, dispelling the gloom. . . . He, desiring to produce various creatures from his own body, first created the waters, and deposited in them a seed. This [seed] became a golden egg, resplendent as the sun, in which he himself was born as Brahmā, the progenitor of all the worlds.

On the nature of the tree or plant rising from the germ at the beginning of creation the oldest Vedic accounts volunteer no explanation. Accord-

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ing to the Purāṇa quoted above the plant in question is a lotus and the same is the case in the slightly different version of the same account in Bhāg. Pur. I 8, 2. This version says (cf. Mbh. III 272, 44 and XII 207, 13): When Bhagavat (Vishṇu), wrapped in meditative slumber, reclined on the ocean there sprang from his navel like from a pond a lotus which gave birth to Brahmā, the Lord of creation.

In Buddhist legends of a cosmic nature the lotus likewise generally appears as the tree of life.

So Lalitavistara 64, 11: In the same night in which the Bodhisattva descended into his mother's womb a lotus sprang up rising from the waters below cleaving the earth over sixty-eight times hundred-thousand yojanas up to Brahmā's heaven. And nobody saw the lotus but the leader, the best of men and the great Brahmā set over ten times hundred-thousands. And all essence or quintessence of power immanent in the primordial matter of the three times thousand of worlds, all this lay like a drop of honey in this big lotus.

The same cosmic lotus rising from the primeval waters constitutes, as we know, the leading motif in the well-known legend of the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī.[2]

In another legend dealing with the Buddha's life the Bodhisattva's navel has taken the place of the life-bearing waters. According to this story the Bodhisattva, in the night of the Great Departure, had five dreams, the second of which showed him how from his navel a lotus rose right up to the heaven of the Akanishṭha gods.[3]

Finally, the cosmic lotus has an important part in the legend of the founding of the land of Nepal by the Bodhisvatta Mañjuśrī.[4] The story relates how the valley which now is the most fertile and populous part of Nepal, in olden times was filled with water and so became the lake Nāgavāsa, the abode of the holy nāga Karkoṭaka. There were various kinds of water plants except the lotus. In the course of time the Buddha Vivaśvin visited the lake and throwing in a grain of seed spoke thus: "When this seed shall produce a flower, it will give birth to Svayambhū, lord of Agnishṭhabhuvana, in the shape of a flame." Instantly from the seed in the centre of the lake a magic lotus sprang of the size of a cart wheel, having ten-thousand stamens, diamonds at the top, pearls at the foot and rubies in the middle. From the calyx rose a flame, purer and

[2] A. Foucher, " The great Miracle at Çrāvastī", in *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, pp. 147 ff.

[3] *Lalitavistara*, ed. Lefmann, I, p. 196. Other versions of the same story are mentioned by P. Mus, "Barabuḍur", *BEFEO*, XXXIV (1934) p. 215.

[4] Sylvain Lévi, *Le Népal*, III, pp. 163 ff.

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more radiant than the sun. This was the Ādi-Buddha who forthwith without symbol or emblem revealed himself in purest essence. After many years the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī appeared on the scene. Desiring to see the magic lotus in its entirety he caused through his magic powers the waters of the lake to drain off with the result that the bottom of the lake ran dry and was turned into fertile soil. From the soil the lotus rose and on this Svayambhū sat enthroned. Mañjuśrī then, arriving at the root of the plant, heard nearby the soft bubbling of a well. He bent over and instantly Guhyeśvarī, the Lady of Mysteries, revealed herself in her awe-inspiring appearance.

The principle of life in art and literature

We have now reached the stage where we might co-ordinate both the above classes of conceptions of the origin of life.

On the one hand, the written records have made us familiar with the idea that the whole universe, symbolized by a lotus-plant, originated from the principle of life Hiraṇyagarbha. On the other hand, sculptural art has acquainted us with the same universal lotus as springing from the bulb-shaped root of the plant, the padmamūla. The obvious conclusion from the combination of both conceptions is that the origin of life appearing in literature as Hiraṇyagarbha is presented in art as padmamūla.[5]

The principle of life and Agni

The identification of the germ of life of the texts with the padmamūla of decorative art, which for the present is only corroborated by a few facts,

[5] Reviewing the Dutch edition of this book Dr. F. B. J. Kuiper remarked as follows (*BKI*, 107, p. 70): "The author rightly brought plant symbolism into relation with the Rigvedic myth of Hiraṇyagarbha who gave his book its name. But in the Rigveda the lotus is almost unknown and the Vedic Aryans certainly had no lotus *myth*. It is irrelevant that this myth, therefore, need not be 'younger' but obviously is an indigenous product grafted upon the Vedic myth in a later stage of the Indianizing process. The point is that Bosch, induced by his a-historical method—which elsewhere was required and motivated by the nature of his archaeological material — ignored the fact that the Vedic myth of the Golden Germ was in existence already irrespective of the lotus symbol and therefore cannot be traced back to it."

This remark is true, but the point left out as irrelevant is in this connection of great importance. No doubt, in Ṛigvedic times the mūla, not of the lotus (which does not exist, cf. p. 42, n. 18) but of some other plant or tree (the *śamī*?), played the part of Hiraṇyagarbha and much later, in post-Vedic times, was grafted upon the lotus. That the lotus cannot be primary is clear from the fact that in art and literature it is usually represented by a tree in which an aśvattha or another *vanaspati* is rooted (cf. the next chapter). This conception obviously is foreign to the lotus and must have been transferred to it from some other plant (the *śamī*?).

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will be placed on a firmer footing in our future enquiry and then will lend itself to further elaboration. Before we enter on this subject I wish to raise another point closely linked with the above and of no less importance as will appear later on. I have in mind the question of what conceptions in the Indian's mind are connected with the idea of 'life'. Has this been to him, we ask, as great a mystery as to us, the dark primeval source of all things, beyond all human knowledge and understanding, unfathomable to mortals? Or is the sphere harbouring his conception of life different from ours, a realm in which unimaginable and imperceivable things acquire a definite shape, receive familiar names, and so are brought within the scope of human understanding? In other words, may we apply to the Indian conception of life the words of Betty Heimann: "To the Indian there is at the beginning of all knowledge a visible phenomenon, never an abstract idea"?[6]

In favour of this theory there is first of all the close connection between the origin of life and the complex of visible appearances embodied in the god of fire Agni.

This connection is clearly expressed in the first place by the fact that both are said to be made of gold. With regard to the germ of life this is implied by the name Hiraṇyagarbha itself, whereas Agni's identity with gold, too, is a mythical commonplace, *e.g.* RV II 2, 4, VII 3, 6 where he is compared, that is identified, with gold; RV IV 3, 1 and X 20, 9 attributing to him a golden body, and Mbh. III 200, 128 and XIII 84, 42, *passim,* calling him the lord, the father or the maker of gold. Furthermore, there is the Vedic rite representing him by a golden symbol.

But there is more. Just as the golden germ, so the golden Agni sprang from the womb of the waters. The waters are Agni's abode and retreat, they are also his mothers (RV X 91, 6, AV I 33, 1); he is said to have been begotten in the waters; like the origin of life he is called *apāṃ garbhaḥ*, the 'germ' or the 'foetus' of the waters (RV III 1, 12-13; III 5, 3; I 70, 3), and the golden Apāṃ Napāt, the 'son of the waters', is one of his mythical appearances (RV II 35, cf. Vāj. S. VIII 24).

On the other hand, between Agni and Prajāpati there is a relation corresponding with that between the germ of life and this god. The germ is called the son of Prajāpati (Śat. Br. II 4, 2, 1; VI 2, 1, 1; XI 1, 6, 14) or is said to have sprung from Prajāpati's mouth (Śat. Br. II 2, 4, 1), or again both deities are identified. With regard to the latter point a complete identification of Prajāpati with Agni is not likely to have been

[6] *Studien zur Eigenart indischen Denkens* (1930), p. 13.

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intended, the case being rather that, as is usual in the Brāhmaṇas,[7] a part of Prajāpati or of one of his appearances *(tanū)* has been identified with Angi or has been considered to have given him birth, which points to a similar relation as that between father and son. This theory is corroborated by the well-known doctrine of the Upanishads that the Brahman is a single being with two natures *(dvaibhāvaḥ,* Maitr. Up. VII 11, 8), manifested and unmanifested, mortal and immortal, immanent and transcendent, of this side or of beyond (Maitr. Up. VII 11, 8; VI 3, 15, 36; Bṛih. Up. II 3, 1; cf. Śat. Br. X 4,4, 1: Prajāpati has a mortal body but his breath is immortal; Śat. Br. X 1, 3, 2 and X 1, 4, 1: Prajāpati is partly mortal, partly immortal).

This means that one of these two natures *viz.* the manifest, immanent and hitherside nature, is apt to be identified with Agni.

From the above it follows that Agni and the germ of life sprang from the same parents, Prajāpati and the waters, and so are closely related. The verse RV X 121, 6 quoted before expresses this even more clearly in these words: "When the vast waters filled the universe they became pregnant with a germ and bore fire", which leaves no doubt that the poet's imagination had completely identified the germ of life and Agni.

Now if we combine this with what we just now remarked about the dual nature of Brahman-Prajāpati, then the relation between Prajāpati and the primeval waters on the one hand and that between Agni and the germ of life on the other may be described as follows: When the principle of creation, unmanifested, omnipresent, and all-pervading, consisting of pure breath, light and mind, personified as god Prajāpati and acting as the masculine element in the process of creation, penetrates the female substance embodied in the obscure, inert, primeval waters it manifests itself as Hiraṇyagarbha, the golden germ of life which is essentially one with the golden god of fire Agni.

The principle of life and Soma

However wide the import of this conclusion, we should not halt here. There are indications that besides and in contrast with the idea of life being a manifestation of the unmanifested Brahman there was another conception asserting a similar relation between the germ of life and the female element of the waters. To bring this out more clearly I should point out that the waters are credited with various attributes generally resulting

[7] On this kind of identifications see H. Oldenberg, *Die Weltanschauung der Brāhmaṇa-Texte* (1919), pp. 110 ff.

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in producing, regenerating, perpetuating and protecting life. More particularly, the waters are said to be naturally pure, proof against any pollution (Tāṇḍya MhBr. VI 5, 10), their cleansing power being such that they not only cleanse from wordly stains but also from moral guilt, the sins of violence, cursing and lying (RV I 23, 32; X 9, 8). They bestow wisdom, wealth and offspring (RV X 30, 12), grant all prayers (Chānd. Up. VII 10, 2), afford protection against demons and other powers of darkness (Śat. Br. I 1, 1, 1), they contain all remedies and are frequently said to hold, or even to be, amṛita.[8]

On closer scrutiny, however, it appears that the waters are not thought to possess these attributes themselves but through an immanent force, the *rasa* or 'essence', and that from this essential substance emanate the salutary life-giving influences just mentioned.[9] This rasa is purest in the sap of plants for plants are the 'embryo of the waters' *(apāṃ garbhaḥ,* AV VIII 7, 8), water being their very nature *(udakātmanaḥ* AV IV 4, 5). From the rain and from the water in the soil they draw rasa for their growth and sustenance, they are reared from rasa. The sap of each plant is rasa but the sap of Soma, the king of plants, is rasa in its strongest concentration, its purest essence. The same substance is moreover found in cow's milk, in rain, dew, mead *(madhu)*, blood, semen virile, and liquor *(surā)*. All these liquids have in common that more or less they impart health, ward off sickness and old age, generate and perpetuate life and protect it from death.

The primordial duality

The important question now is what connection there is between the above-mentioned 'living' substance of the waters and the aquatic element at the beginning of creation, the lifeless, inert, chaotic mass, which in itself is unfit for any productive act. What influence separated from this element the rasa, the embodiment of all that man expects from the water: a cure for ills, a weapon against evil spirits, a bestower of wealth, fertility, longevity and immortality?

This is the point where the Prajapāti-Agni and the waters-rasa conceptions meet. If rasa-Soma it the essence of the waters just as Agni is the fiery essence of creative breath, then, obviously, both essences sprang from the same origin, this origin being no other but the primary act of creation, *viz.* the entering of creative breath into the waters, of the All-

[8] See quotations by Rönnow, *Trita Āptya*, p. 26, 65.
[9] Rönnow, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 65, 68, 119. Other names for rasa in Vedic literature are *payas, ghṛita, vāja, bheshaja, anna, ūrj, kīlāla, pīyūsha,* and *svadhā.*

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Spirit into the All Matter, the male into the female element, from which act sprang life in the form of the Golden Germ.

This germ, therefore, has the same relation to both the elements from which it sprang, it is the essence of both, it is both Agni and rasa-Soma. It unites in itself both contrasting natures making them merge in a duality, one in essence, yet distinct, constituting the primordial source from which all creation springs and draws its vital energy.

The latter feature implies that the dualistic nature inherent in the germ of life is not restricted to this germ but communicates itself to all creation and propagates itself in all creatures to the effect that as Mbh. VIII 34, 49 has it "the whole world is made of Agni and Soma", or that according to Hariv. 10660 "the whole world both movable and immovable has the nature of Agni and Soma".

The same law of nature applies to every creature: that it is built up from two substances, Agni and Soma, and that, consequently, its nature is governed by the preponderance of either of these two. Even the gods are submitted to the law that in every individual two souls inhabit one breast; that from one and the same source spring two divergent streams of life, witness Mbh. XIII 160, 44 where it is said: "Brahmins well versed in the Vedas know the two bodies of this god (Mahādeva), one terrifying *(ghora)*, the other mild *(śiva)*, and these two bodies in turn assume various forms. The terrifying body is like fire, the thunder and the sun; the gentle and mild body resembles dharma, the water and the moon. One half of his being is Agni, the other half is called Soma."

Beings of the nature of Agni are numerous in Indian mythology and fables in which they play an important part. They may be recognized either by their fiery nature or appearance, or by a peculiar habit, characteristic or behaviour which they have in common with the god of fire or with one of his many manifestations such as the sacrificial fire, the fire of the pyre, the fire of love, of time, of anger, of fever, of knowledge, of battle, of hunger, of speech, etc. I may quote a few examples.

Agni is a mighty leaper *(plavaṃga)*. He has strong jaws, iron teeth, and wide-flowing mane; he emits a loud roar, seizes his prey with his claws and clears a way through the wood. In all this he resembles the Agni-animal par excellence, the lion. Cf. the appearance of the bodhisattva as a lion in jātaka 143, 153, 157, etc. and as the king of lions in jāt. 172 and 188.

The fire god is voracious by nature, he is the 'all-eater' *(sarvabhuj, sarvabhaksha*; as the pyral fire he is the eater of raw meat *(amād)* and devourer of corpses *(kravyād)*, hence his manifestations as dog and as jackal. Cf. the bodhisattva as dog, jāt. 22, as jackal, jāt. 148, and as king of the jackals, jāt. 142.

As the snatcher of offerings *(hara)* Agni is thievish and rapacious. Cf.

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Rudra-Śiva as lord of thieves and highwaymen[10], and the bodhisattva as a thief and a leader of thieves, jāt. 279.

In his demoniacal appearance he devours his parents and a living child falls a prey to him (Mbh., II, 127, 2); he demands the heads of his slain enemies (Mbh., II, 275, 25) and delights in accepting human sacrifice (Mbh., III, 275, 20). Cf. various deities in their *krodha* form, and the yakshas and rākshasas in the fables.

Acting as fire of love Agni is a heartless seducer of women and adulterer. The lustful goat is his sacred animal and serves him as *vāhana*; as Apām Napāt he is surrounded by the waters and resembles a youth in the midst of love-sick maidens. (RV II 35, 3-51; X, 30, 6). Cf. Kṛishṇa amidst the gopīs, Śiva-Rudra amidst the female hermits, and the bodhisattva amidst Māra's daughters.[11]

Agni is Anila's son; he makes his abode amongst plants and is called the great cosmic dancer. Cf. Maṅkaṇaka, also a son of Anila, who is said to have had sap in his veins in stead of blood and to have danced till the whole world joined him (Mbh. X, III 83, 116 sq.; IX, 38, 86 sq.).

Agni is called the howler and his flames are compared with sacrificial ladles (RV I, 76, 5; X 6, 4). Cf. the tale of Bṛihaspati who howls for anger and throws his spoon in the air (Mbh. XII, 337, 14).

Furthermore, Agni's chief personifications are those of brahmin, priest, prince, seer, bard, poet, orator, ascetic, omniscient scholar, archer, charioteer, everyman's guest, messenger and barber (with his flames he shaves the earth as a barber with his razor shaves the beard, RV I 65, 8; X 142, 4).[12] Cf. the bodhisattva as a barber, jāt. 78; as a child, a youth and an old man (Agni is old and young as well, he is the first-born but time and again he is reborn and then becomes the youngest amongst the gods). Finally, Agni also appears in the form of a bull, a charger, a racehorse, a haṃsa, an eagle, and a dove.

The water-rasa-soma complex of attributes has been dealt with above (pp. 52 ff., 59 ff.).

The elixir of immortality

Finally, I may suggest that the substance of the germ of life which is identical to both Agni and Soma and, according to the above evidence, occupied such an important place in the Indian conception of life and cosmos, also has a part in Indian mythology and there corresponds with a substance known by another name but virtually identical, *viz.* the elixir of life: *amṛita*.

In considering this point we do well to remember that the conception of amṛita originally did not imply the notion of an eternal life.[13] As Tāṇḍya

[10] E. Arbman, *Rudra* (1922), p. 45, 248.

[11] W. Jahn, "Die Legende vom Devadāruvana", *ZMDG*, 69 (1915), pp. 529 ff., and 70, pp. 301 ff.; F. D. K. Bosch, "Het lingga-heiligdom van Dinaja" (The Liṅga sanctuary of D.), *TBG*, 64 (1924), pp. 238 ff.

[12] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 88 ff.

[13] Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice*, p. 94; cf. Senart, *Lég. du Bouddha*, p. 202, and *passim*; Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, II, p. 19: "In Semitic and European conceptions of

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Mahābr., XXIV, 19, 2 has it: "Immortality to man means to live a complete life and to be happy." According to Śat. Br., X, 4, 3, 1, a complete life is "an existence not sapped by days and nights before old age", Even more accurate is Śat. Br. X, 2, 6, 8: "He who lives a hundred years or more wins immortality." Rönnow rightly remarks[14] :"Originally amṛita is nothing else but the elixir of life of folklore and myth, a magical means of sustaining actual life, providing protection against ill-health, old age and death, the triune evil defeated by the Buddha who therefore was rightly regarded as one of the bestowers of amṛita upon mankind."

With regard to the relation between the elixir of life and the gods Agni and Soma, I pointed out before that Agni's substance is identified with gold, the same metal with which Soma frequently is compared and identified.[15] The very same is often said about the elixir: "Amṛita is gold, immortality is gold" (Maitr. S. II 2, 2; Śat. Br. III 8, 2, 27; Ait. Br. VII 4, 6). In their being identical with gold the three substances, therefore, correspond and coincide.

But there is more. Kuhn already pointed out[16] that the texts hardly discriminate between amṛita and Soma, on the contrary, both fluids are mostly considered as being identical. The same applies to the relation between amṛita and Agni. Is not amṛita said to flame like a fire, to radiate a dazzling light, in a word, to behave like Agni? And do we need, in this connection, to recall the description of the fire that surrounds the amṛita, that blazes up, radiates and rises in the air when Garuḍa attempts to grasp the coveted elixir (Ādip. 32)? This fluid being thus identical with both Agni and Soma, we may conclude that it is also identical with the dual being made up from these two substances.

If to the results thus obtained we assign their proper place in the Indian conception of the world, conceived as a lotus with cosmic dimensions, in other words if in our imagination we reconstruct the image of these things as it was conceived by the Indian and expressed in his art, then Hiraṇyagarbha, the germ and womb of all that lives, assumes the shape of the root of the cosmic lotus, the padmamūla, and it is filled with the

the Water of Life the draught is conceived of as bestowing immortality forever. In India we meet with the more sober conception of repeated rejuvenation; and this is equally true, whether we take the case of the gods whose life is renewed by repeated draughts of *soma*, or that of human beings magically restored to live or rejuvenated by the good offices of Indra or the Aśvins. All the life charms of the Atharva Veda are directed to restoration of health, or to longer or fuller life, never to immortality in a literal sense." Cf. also H. Zimmer, *Ewiges Indien* (1930), p. 15.

[14] *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

[15] A. Bergaigne, *La religion védique*, I, p. 154.

[16] *Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertranks* (1859), p. 144.

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golden elixir of life that unites the essence of the two primordial principles Agni and Soma.

From this root the sap is sent forth in all directions, it rises through the central stem, spreads through the side-shoots, flows out through the nodes, penetrates into the plant's branches, leaves, flowers and fruits, and wherever it appears it engenders Life, the Life that animates animals and men, demons and gods, that makes the fields fertile and the cattle thrive, pours riches and wealth over the earth, just as we see it so vividly pictured on the Bharhut and Sānchi reliefs.

Yet the same root of Life conceals the discord that since the beginning of the world manifests itself in nature and in the behaviour of all creatures. Since the sap of life is one with Agni and Soma, these two polar forces, united in a dual being and mixed in different proportions, propagate themselves in various forms in all created things, make them share their nature and so give birth to that vast and variegated number of beings that people the earth, the air, and the celestial spheres.

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III

THE TWO TREES

A. THE CELESTIAL FIG-TREE

The celestial tree in literature

So far the lotus has only been discussed as a plant or tree, having indeed cosmic dimensions but still possessing normal qualities in that it is supposed to take root in the soil or in the waters and to raise its branches and leaves to the sky. AV XIX, 32, 3: O herb, thou art rooted in the earth whereas thy top is in heaven.

In this chapter we are dealing with a tree which in every respect contrasts with the earthly tree. Just as the female element of the waters is embodied in a tree, so the male element of creative breath is symbolized by a tree. The former, however, is rooted in the earth, the latter in the sky, the former pushes its roots downwards and its branches upwards, whereas with the latter the opposite is the case. Finally, the former is the symbol of Soma born from water, the latter of Agni generated by creative breath.

It may be asked whether the celestial tree so conceived is the outcome of a conception according to which in the celestial ocean mentioned in Vedic texts (RV VII 6, 7; IX 97, 44; X 98, 5-6; Śat. Br. VII 5, 2, 56) a similar process of impregnation took place as in the terrestrial waters, that is to say whether here, too, creative breath entered the waters to beget a Golden Germ from which a tree, viz. the celestial tree, sprang — or whether the celestial tree originated from a need the Indians might have felt to complete their world conception by creating a tree rooted in heaven as the counterpart of the terrestrial lotus.

I shall not attempt to answer these questions but prefer to refer to the texts which speak of the *aśvattha* as the inverted celestial tree.[1]

[1] On the inverted tree see: Ernst Kuhn, "Der Mann im Brunnen", *Festgr. Böhtlingk* (1888), pp. 68 ff.; L. von Schröder, "Lebensbaum und Lebenstraum", *Festgr. Kuhn* (1916), pp. 59 ff.; Coomaraswamy, "The inverted Tree", *QJMyth. Soc.*, XXIX; M. B. Emeneau, *The strangling figs in Sanskrit literature, Univ. of Calif. Publ. in class. Phil.*, Vol. 13 (1949), pp. 364-369.

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Kaṭha Up., VI, 1: With the root above and branches below is this everlasting Aśvattha. That is the Pure; that is Brahman; that indeed is called the Immortal; therein all the worlds are set; beyond it nonesoever goeth. This truly is That.

Maitr. Up., VI, 4: The threefold (*tripad*)[2] Brahman has its root above. Its branches are ether, air, fire, water, earth, and the rest. This Brahman is named the 'One Aśvattha'. The fiery energy *(tejas)* thereof is yonder Sun, and it too is the fiery energy of the syllable Om. Therefore one should worship it with this same 'Om' incessantly; it is its 'One Awakener'.

Bhag. Gītā, XV, 1-2; With root above and branches downward, the Aśvattha, they say, is eternal. Its leaves are the (Vedic) hymns, he who knows it is a knower of the Veda. Downwards and upwards extend its branches, nourished by the qualities, with the objects of sense as sprouts. Below also are stretched forth its roots, resulting in actions in the world of men.

Other texts refer to the aśvattha as a celestial tree without mentioning its inverted position. So in the well-known enigmatical verses:

RV, I, 164, 20-21: Two birds *(suparṇau)* in conjoint friendship rest in one and the same tree; one eats the tasty fig *(pippalam)*, the other looks on and does not eat . . . there the birds sing incessantly their part of lasting-life.

AV, V, 4, 3-5: The Aśvattha-tree is the seat of the gods in the third heaven from here. There the gods procured the *kushṭha*,[3] the visible manifestation of amṛita. A golden ship with golden tackle moved upon the heavens. There the gods procured the kushṭha, the flower of amṛita. The paths were golden, and golden were the oars; golden were the ships upon which they carried forth the kushṭha hither.

Chānd. Up. VIII, 5, 3: Ara and Ṇya are two lakes in the world of Brahman, in the third heaven from here; and there is the lake Airammadīya, and the Aśvattha tree dripping soma *(aśvatthaḥ somasavanaḥ)*, and the city of Brahman called Aparājitā (the Invincible) and the golden hall of the Lord.

In still other places the celestial tree, inverted or not, is mentioned but not called an aśvattha.

[2] *Tripad*, alluding to RV X, 90,3: "All created things are his first foot (or 'a quarter of him'), his three feet (or 'three fourth of him') are what is immortal in heaven."

[3] M. Bloomfield, "Hymns of the Atharvaveda", *SBE*, XLII, p. 414: "The kushṭha-plant *(Costus speciosus* or *arabicus)* is not mentioned in the Rgveda, but is common in the Atharvaveda where three hymns are devoted to account of its origin and healing properties. It is the prince of remedies. Like the soma-plant it grows upon mountains, especially upon high peaks of the Himālaya."

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RV X, 31, 7 and X, 81, 4: What was the wood, and what the tree of which they fashioned heaven and earth? — Which question is answered in Taitt. Br. II, 8, 9, 6: The wood was Brahman, Brahman the tree of which they fashioned heaven and earth; it is my deliberate word, ye knowledgeable men, that there stands Brahman, world-supporting.

RV I, 24, 7: In the unfathomable space king Varuṇa, he of purified intelligence, upholds the tree's crest *(vanasya stūpam)*; its ground is up above; (its branches) are below; may their rays (or banners: *ketavaḥ*) be planted deep in us.

Śvet. Up. III, 8-9 (= Mahā-Nar. Up. X, 20): I know the Great Person *(purusha)* of sunlike colour beyond the darkness. A man who knows him truly, passes over death, there is no other path to go. This whole Universe is filled by this person *(purusha)*, to whom there is nothing superior, from whom there is nothing different, than whom there is nothing smaller or larger, who stands alone, fixed like a tree in the sky.

Taitt. Ar. I, 11, 5: He who knows the tree with its root above and branches below, that person would not at all believe that death would kill him.

Mbh. XIV (Anugītā-parvan), 47, 12-15: Sprung from the Unmanifested *(avyakta)*, arising from it as only support, its trunk is *buddhi*, its inward cavities the channels of the senses, the great elements its branches, the objects of the senses its leaves, its fair flowers good and evil *(dharmādharmau)*, pleasure and pain the consequent fruits. This eternal Brahma-tree *(brahma-vṛiksha)* is the source of life for all beings. This is the Brahma wood, and of this Brahma-tree That (Brahman) is.

These quotations give the impression that in the Indian conception of the world the celestial fig-tree has a place not less significant than the terrestrial lotus. Before considering further the relation between these two plants, we recall to mind the following facts in connection with the aśvattha and the closely related nyagrodha.

Amongst the sacred trees mentioned repeatedly and under various names in Indian literature the lactiferous ficus species *ficus religiosa*, L., Skr. *aśvattha* or *pippala*, the 'pipal' (the bodhi-tree of Gautama Buddha) and the *ficus bengalensis*, L., *ficus indica*, Roxb., Skr. *nyagrodha*, *vaṭa*, *bhāṇḍīra* or *parkaṭī*, the 'banyan tree' or Jav. 'waringin' (the bodhi-tree of Kāśyapa) rank foremost. Both trees belong to the largest plants growing in Indian soil, hence they are called *vanaspati* 'lord of the forest', a name they share with the fire god Agni.

The sacredness of the aśvattha probably is older than that of the

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banyan-tree. According to a picture on a clay tablet found at Mohenjo-daro the aśvattha was already worshipped in the chalcolithic age,[4] and it is the tree of which the Veda says that it is planted in the third, the highest heaven and is the seat of the gods. Here mead and the Soma drink are produced which the Ādityas enjoy. Here, too, dwell the god Yama and the souls of the departed and is the realm of justice and bliss, the destination of the just (RV X, 135, 1; I, 164, 20-22; AV V, 4, 3; VI, 95, 1; XIX, 39, 6).[5]

As for the conception of the aśvattha as a celestial tree we may refer to the literary sources mentioned above. To this function of the tree we often shall have to return. We now confine ourselves to the remark that the tree, in consequence of its being identified explicitly with the highest Brahman, is apt to be endowed with all the attributes and qualities of that Brahman as well. So it is no wonder that to the Indian mind the celestial aśvattha not only figures as the Tree of Life, branching out throughout space, synonymous with all existence and all the worlds, but it also is the Tree of Knowledge, the 'One Awakener' *(eka sambodhayitṛ)*, the 'enduring basis of the vision of Brahman' *(brahmadhīyālamba)* as Maitr. Up., VI, 4 has it.[6] With this in view it is important to notice that in post-Vedic literature the four branches of the Tree often are identified with the four Vedas, the source of highest wisdom, and that in many a legend we are told that a man sitting under a holy fig tree is able to foretell future events, to remember his former births, to understand the language of birds and other animals, in short, to participate in the inexhaustible store of power and wisdom inherent in the highest godhead.[7]

It is highly significant that this same Tree of Life and Wisdom has been chosen to play a predominant part in the legend of the Buddha. For, as Coomaraswamy has justly remarked,[8] "every traditional symbol necessarily carries with it its original values, even when used or intended to be used in a more restricted sense". The bodhi-tree at Bodh Gayā, in fact, is strictly analogous to the 'One Awakener', the 'enduring basis of the vision of Brahman'. For was it not when sitting under its branches that Śākyamuni had a vision of his former births? And was it not on that same spot that the highest wisdom was revealed to him, that he in truth became Buddha 'the Awakened'?

[4] J. Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, I (1939), pp. 63 ff., and Pl. XII, fig. 18.
[5] W. Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder* (1920), pp. 42, 93, 175.
[6] The foregoing sentences are freely adapted from Coomaraswamy, *Elements of buddhist Iconography* (1935), p. 9.
[7] Senart, *Légende du Bouddha*, p. 196.
[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

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It would be beyond the scope of this work to treat at length the significance of the aśvattha in Indian religion, literature, ethnology and folklore. Suffice it to say that in post-Vedic literature the aśvattha is conceived as the embodiment of the highest god. It is frequently said to be a form of Vishṇu, just like the palāśa of Brahmā and the nyagrodha of Śiva. In the Bhagavad Gītā (X 30) Kṛishṇa as the supreme god says of himself: "Amongst all trees I am the Aśvattha." According to another view its root is a form of Brahmā, the central part of Vishṇu, and the top of Śiva.[9]

With these ideas correspond statements in ethnology and folklore that up to the present time in various parts of India the aśvattha is still worshipped as the abode or symbol of a deity or is adored for its own sake.[10] In the latter case the object is to secure the help of the magical power of the tree. Its branches drive away enemies, its leaves produce intelligence in the child, fulfil desires for wealth, male offspring, etc. It is worth noticing that this worship is attended with feelings of awe and fear. The tree is magically dangerous and should not be near a house. Its dedication has to be performed in silence and its name remains unspoken, a taboo probably connected with the belief that the spirits of the ancestors dwell in the tree or are embodied in it.[11]

Analogous to the worship of the aśvattha is that of the nyagrodha (banyan tree). It is not yet mentioned in the Ṛigveda[12] but both in later Indian literature and in present popular belief it occupies a place as important as that of the aśvattha.[13]

[9] J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Mächte der Vegetation*, II (1937), p. 132.

[10] Chowbe, "On Hindu beliefs about Trees", *JAnthr. Soc. Bombay*, 1899-1901, pp. 224 ff.; Metha, "Aśwattha or Tree Worship", *ibid.*, 1913-1916, pp. 315 ff.; S. Ch. Roy, "Some Trees and Herbs in Ritual and Folklore", *ibid.*, 1927-1928, pp. 588 ff.; Sarat Chandra Mitra, "Worship of the Pipal Tree in North Bihar", *JB & ORS*, VI (1920), pp. 572 ff.; R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay* (1924), p. 118; Chauduri, "A prehistoric Tree Cult", *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, XIX, pp. 318 ff.

[11] Meyer, *op. cit.*, II, p. 133.

[12] That, however, the tree must have been well known in the Vedic era, is shown by RV, I, 24, 7 where the aerial roots of the banyan are certainly referred to. Cf. Pischel and Geldner, *Ved. Studien*, I, (1889), p. 113; L. von Schröder, *Lebensbaum*, p. 60; Hillebrandt, *Lieder des Rgveda*, 1913, p. 75; J. Charpentier, "Naicāçākha" *JRAS*, 1930, p. 338.

[13] Yule-Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*², pp. 65 ff.; Dubois, *Hindu Manners*, pp. 652 ff.; Thurston, *Omens and Superstitions of S.-Ind.*, pp. 117 ff.; Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections*, ed. Crooke p. 385; Enthoven, *Bombay Folkl.*, pp. 118 ff.; B. Laufer *Citralakshana*, p. 151. — According to *Jāt.* 19, 50, 353, and 537 human sacrifices were offered to the nyagrodha, this being performed in a peculiarly revolting manner. Cf. Charpentier, *loc. cit.*, p. 434: "The unhappy princes were knocked unconscious, then their eyes were slit out, the bodied cut open and ...the entrails were hung as garlands on the tree and it was marked with spread hands dipped in the blood of the victims."

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It will appear later that the nyagrodha, like the aśvattha, has been identified with various deities of higher or lower rank. In this connection I may point out that although *ficus religiosa* and *ficus indica* are different trees with clearly distinct growth habit and leafage — the former, unlike the latter, has no aerial roots; the leaves of the former are heart-shaped and have slightly elongated points, those of the latter are oval — the two ficus species both in literature and art are often mistaken the one for the other. This is shown already in the texts quoted above where the celestial tree with downward growing branches obviously refers to the nyagrodha ('the downward growing one') although it is called an aśvattha. The same applies to Pāli-literature where Gautama's bodhi-tree is called either an *assattha* or a *nigrodha*. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that the famous bodhi-tree of Bodh Gayā was a nyagrodha, although in art the same tree is usually pictured as an aśvattha.[14]

The peculiar growth habits of many Ficus species are so obvious that they have become commonplaces in literature about India. I may quote here a passage from the illuminating article on this subject by Mr. M. B. Emeneau.[15]. "The banyan, he says, already found in Pliny's *Natural History*, is only the best known of those species that develop from their branches aerial roots that may reach the ground and thicken into "pillar-roots", or subsidiary trunks. The continually expanding system of new trunks, all connected through the branches, may support a crown up to 2,000 feet in circumference (a famous specimen near Poona, now dead). Milton is the author of the *locus classicus* on these trees in English literature, in the passage in which he describes the source of the fig leaves plucked by Adam and Eve for aprons (*Paradise Lost*, ix, 1100-1111):

. . . . they chose
The Figtree, not that kind for Fruit renown'd,
But such as at this day to *Indians* known
In *Malabar* or *Decan* spreds her Armes
Braunching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended Twigs take root, and Daughters grow
About the Mother Tree, a Pillard shade
High overarch't, and echoing Walks between . . . .

Another habit of some of the fig species, which has had a small but somewhat striking literary history, is that which gives the strangling figs their qualifying epithet. They begin as epiphytes on other species of trees and, as thee grow, gradually squeeze to death ("strangle") the host . . . ."[16]

[14] Coomaraswamy, *The inverted Tree*, p. 15.
[15] *The strangling figs*, pp. 346-349.
[16] The following description, quoted by Mr. Emeneau (*loc. cit.*, pp. 347 ff.), is taken from the account given by E.J.H. Corner, in *Wayside Trees of Malaya* (Singapore, 1940), I, pp. 664-665.

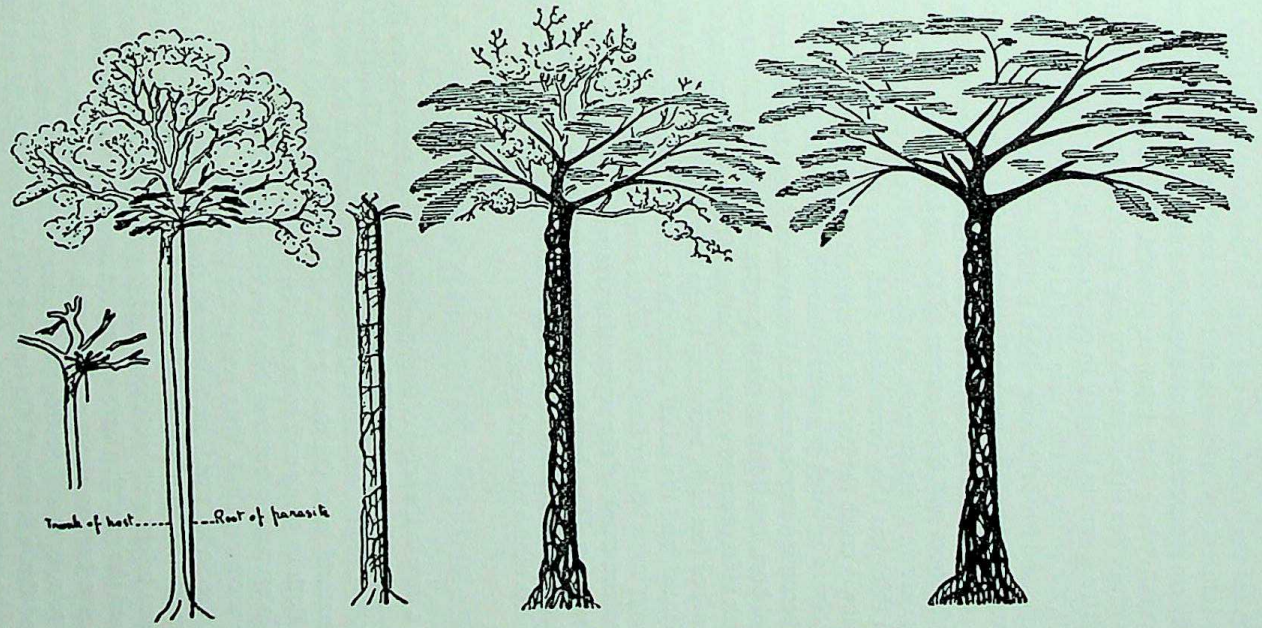

Fig. 10 Diagram of the development of a strangling fig.

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"Fig-trees whose trunks are composed of a basket-work of interlacing and anastomosing roots are called strangling figs because normally they begin life on other trees and gradually squeeze them to death. Birds, squirrels and monkeys, which eat the fruits, drop the seeds on the branches of forest-trees where they grow into epiphytic bushes that hold on by strong roots encircling the branches. From thence their roots spread down the trunk of the supporting tree to the ground, where they grow vigorously. Side-roots encircle the trunk, joining up with other side-roots where they touch, and aerial roots grown down into the soil from various heights. In other cases, as that shown in Text Fig. 250 [our fig. 10], the epiphytic bush may send at an early stage an aerial root straight to the ground and from this root, which is like a perpendicular cable, side-roots grow towards the trunk, as though they where able to see it, encircling it and ramifying over it. In either case, the supporting trunk becomes enveloped in a basket of fig-roots and the branches of the fig-bush begin to spread widely through the crown of its support. As the fig-roots and their supporting trunk increase in thickness they press upon each other but the fig-roots, being the stronger, slowly crush the bark of the support against its wood with the effect that the supporting trunk is gradually ringed, and its limbs begin to die back, its crown becoming stag-headed and uneven. A long struggle ensues between parasite and host, but if the fig-plant is vigorous it surely kills its support and finally stands in its place on a massive basket of roots. This "radical trunk" may reach a hundred feet high, according to the height of the branch on which the seed germinated, and the initial cables that descend from the young epiphyte are commonly mistaken for the stems of the climbers that have grown up from below. The dead trunk of the supporting tree rots away for many years in the basket of fig-roots. How long it takes to strangle a big forest-tree, we do not know but from the sprouting of the seed to the independence of the fig-tree can scarcely be less than a hundred years".

In the Palāsa-jātaka (no. 370) this growth habit is referred to as follows:

Once upon a time in the reign of Brahmadatta, king of Benares, the Bodhisattva came to life as a golden goose. He lived in a golden cave, in Chittakūṭa mountain in the Himālaya-region, and used to go constantly and eat the wild paddy that grew on a natural lake. On the way by which he went to and fro was a big Judas tree. Both in going and returning, he would always stop and rest there. So friendship sprang up between him and the divinity that dwelt in that tree. By and bye a certain fowl, after eating the ripe fruit of a banyan, came and perched on the Judas tree,[17] and dropped its excrement into the fork of it. Thence there sprang up a young banyan, which grew to the height of four inches and was bright with red shoots and greenery. The royal goose, on seeing this, addressed the guardian deity of the tree and said, "My good friend, every tree on which a banyan shoot springs up is destroyed by its growth. Do not suffer it to grow, or it will destroy your place of abode. Go back at once, and root it up and throw it away". On hearing this the tree-god did not heed these words. Then the royal goose spread out his wings and made straight for mount Chittakūṭa. Thenceforth he came back no more. Bye and bye the banyan shoot

[17] Skr. *palāśa, Butea frondosa,* Roxb.

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grew up. This tree had also its guardian deity. And in its growth, it broke down the Judas tree, and with a branch the abode of the tree-god also fell. At this moment reflecting on the words of the royal goose, the tree-god thought, "The king of the geese foresaw this danger in the future and warned me of it, but I did not hearken unto his words". Thus did the banyan, as it grew up, break down all the Judas tree and reduced it to a mere stump, and the dwelling of the tree-god wholly disappeared.[18]

It should be noted that the aśvattha *śamīgarbha,* i.e. an aśvattha-tree beginning life as an epiphyte growing on the stem of a śamī-tree *(Acacia suma,* L.), has an odour of particular sanctity. Śat. Br. XI 5, 1, 17 gives the precept that from the wood of this aśvattha should be made the *uttarāraṇi,* the standing piece of wood of the ritual fire drill, and from the wood of the śamī which feeds this aśvattha the *adharāraṇi,* the lying piece of wood of this drill.[19]

This precept shows the aśvattha to have the nature of Agni, but the fiery nature of this tree is even more clearly expressed in the well-known myth of Purūravas and Urvaśī which forms the motive and introduction to this precept. Purūravas, so the story goes, on his search for the nymph Urvaśī, comes to the gandharvas and expresses the wish to become one of them. The reply is: men do not posses the proper sacrificial form of Agni which can make them one of us. They then put fire in an earthen pot which Purūravas accepts and takes with him. On his journey home he leaves the pot and retires for a moment in a wood and on his return finds the fire transformed into an aśvattha and the pot into a śamī-tree.

Finally, a few words may be said about the celestial tree being upside down, a feature of the greatest importance for Indian symbolism as will be seen later on.

Of the different attempts to submit a naturalistic explanation of this feature none so far have been very satisfactory. This is caused by the fact

[18] For a story of about the same contents, see *Koṭisimbala-jātaka* (no. 412); here, however, the tree on which the banyan springs is a silk-cotton tree (Pali *koṭisimbali*; Skr. *salmāli, Bombax malabaricum,* D.C.). For a discussion of other references to the epiphysm of strangling figs (*i.a.* AV, III, 6, and VIII, 8,3) see Emeneau, *loc. cit.*, pp. 350-364.

[19] Dr. F. B. J. Kuiper kindly drew my attention to RV, I, 28, the sūkta of the *añjaḥsava* (rapid preparation of soma) where a wooden pounder and mortar replace the two pressing boards used for the preparation of soma. In v. 2 the whole preparation is treated sexually, in v. 8 both are called 'erected high' *(ṛishva)*. It is interesting that they are addressed as trees, verses 6 and 8. The whole of it recalls the kindling of the fire with the two *araṇis* of aśvattha and śamī wood which, according to RV X, 66, 9, represent a *hieros gamos*. Apparently, other elements also play a part here, as appears from v. 3 suggesting the churning of the milksea (the knot round the *manthā*). It is worth noticing, in any case, that one 'tree' is said to rest in the other.

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that these explanations generally started from the assumption that the authors of the texts relating to the celestial aśvattha had in mind a tree which in its entirety, from top to root, is inverted. It is beyond doubt that both Indian commentators — Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and others — and later literature and symbolism favoured this interpretation. But it is questionable whether this reflects the original meaning of the authors. I believe Paul Deussen was right when he remarked on Kaṭha Up. VI, 1:[20] "All those who take *mūla* in *ūrdhvamūla* in the plural and translate it by 'the roots' have not understood that from the single Brahman as root spring the whole multitude of cosmic phenomena. So the cosmos resembles an aśvattha tree in which, just as with our lime tree, spring from its only root the whole multitude of twigs an branches, except that with this aśvattha the only root, the Brahman, is above and the many branches here are on the earth. It is a mistake to think in this connection of the nyagrodha which sends its branches in the earth. Both in growth and in leafage the aśvattha is totally different."

On the strength of this interpretation *ūrdhvamūla* would be equivalent to expressions like *ūrdhvaloka* and *ūrdhvaretas* in which *ūrdhva* does not stand for 'in an upward direction' but for 'high', 'elevated', and could be interpretated thus: (the aśvattha) whose root is elevated, in the third heaven, in the unfathomable space (as RV I 24, 7 has it), or, with regard to the aśvattha's epiphytism: whose root has its habitat on the top of the tree or other object on which it has settled. In the course of our further examination it will appear that in symbolism the celestial Tree is indeed represented as sprouting from a single root planted in the stem of another tree.

Finally, the fact that the aśvattha's branches are said to grow downward does not conflict with the tree's natural appearance. In this connection Mr. E. J. H. Corner remarks: "Normally no strangling fig develops a main trunk from the top of its basket of roots. Instead, several twigs of the epiphytic bush grow out strongly and as they sag under theirweight new twigs break from their upper sides to sag and branch in their turn, so that is built up a many-limbed, wide-spreading and flat-topped crown with drooping lower branches from the characteristic shape of which a strangling fig can at once be distinguished in the canopy of the forest."[21]

No doubt the poet of the Bhagavad Gītā had this growth habit in mind when he said: "The branches grow in all directions, both up and down" (XV 2), and it could not have been better depicted than on the

[20] *Allg. Gesch. der Phil.*, I, 1, p. 182.
[21] *Op. cit.*, p. 664.

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Barabuḍur-relief shown on Pl. 19*a*. If we look closely we shall find that the pipal here represented has its main branches growing upward, while at the same time the twigs and sprouts bearing the long pointed leaves are drooping so that the total impression is that of a tree *adhaḥśākha*, 'with its branches downward'.[22]

Our above remarks on the growth habit of the aśvattha are not altogether unimportant considering that the ambiguous meaning of the texts has been the cause of divergent notions in literature and art. So we shall find side by side the celestial Tree in a normal and in an inverted position and in the former case two forms are current, *viz.* the Tree with branches rising up, and the one with downward growing branches, the former corresponding with the aśvattha, the latter with the nyagrodha.

The celestial tree in art

Our next inquiry is into the way the celestial tree is pictured in art (Pl. 17-24). Here we find ourselves in the province of the wishing-tree or *kalpataru* and once again we take the Barabuḍur as our chief guide.

With regard to the representations of the wishing-tree on the reliefs of this monument Th. van Erp remarks:[23] "Occasionally the arboreal character has been a little obscured where the foliage has almost completely disappeared and been replaced by a playful ornament of spiral branches bearing pink and blue lotuses. But where the foliage is present we mostly find the leaf of the ficus religiosa clearly depicted [our Pl. 20]. This is worth noticing as it stresses the relation between the wishing tree and the Bodhi tree, the Buddhist sacred tree of knowledge. The tree is often covered with a sunshade, the *chhattra*, symbol of holiness and dignity. In and under the top there are often strings of pearls and festoons and sometimes in the centre of the top there is a jewel resting on a lotus flower."

In another passage Van Erp says:[24] "I also wish to point to a part that is seldom absent, *viz.* an ornament of a triangular shape placed at the point where the stem merges in the top [our Pl. 21*a*, *c*]. It is the well-known triangular ornament often found with personal ornaments, *e.g.* as a decoration of bracelets and such like."

According to the same author, this detail had not only a decorative character but also served a practical purpose.[25] It enabled the sculptor who had to make a real kalpataru [the author here refers to the wishing-tree as

[22] For a different explanation of the inversion of the celestial tree (from the nocturnal aspect) of the cosmos see F. B. J. Kuiper, *BKI*, 107, pp. 83 ff.
[23] *Barabuḍur*, II, p. 347.
[24] *Op. cit.* p. 171.
[25] *Op. cit.*, p. 173

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part of the royal insignia] to bring the branches forward from the back of the triangular ornament and so to hide from view the plainness of the construction. The triangular piece also provided a suitable transition from the bare, stiff stem to the copiously decorated flamboyant top.

So much for Van Erp. For further details referring to the author's article, I wish to discuss here two points raised by him. The first deals with the formation of the top.

The most current type of wishing-tree has two volute side-branches and one central branch rising up straight (Pl. 22*a*). Besides this we find a type with one central branch and four side-branches springing from the same point at the root (Pl. 23*a*) or placed in pairs one atop of the other (Pl. 23*b*). To the three-branched type the same remark applies that we made before, *viz.* that this type may be interpreted in two ways, the planary one when the tree, apart from the central branch, produces only two side-branches; and the three-dimensional one when there are four side-branches two of which are in the field of observation and visible, the other two standing vertically on the first and being invisible. In this connection it is remarkable that descriptions of wishing-trees in literature always mention four or five, never two or three branches,[26] which indicates that the authors in question had in mind not the planary, but the three-dimensional representation of the tree, which after all is only natural.

Our second remark concerns the triangular ornament to be found on the place where the stem merges in the top (Pl. 21*a*, *c*, cf. also the Balinese tree figure in Pl. 18*d*). This object, as Van Erp rightly remarks, is also found on personal ornaments, such as bracelets, moreover we find it as an antefix in the cornices of buildings, on thrones of statues, in royal crowns and in various other applications in Hindu-Javanese architectural and decorative art. One of these applications has a special importance for the explanation of this ornament. We have noticed already that the antefix is also used as the top of the makara-toraṇa (p. 41) and as such is a substitute of the kāla-head current elsewhere. As we have found this antefix to be a stylized form of the padmamūla the conclusion plainly is that the same piece, even when it is part of the wishing-tree, is meant to represent the root of a plant.

[26] See i.a. *Mahāvamsa*, XXX, 63; *Mahāvānija-jāt.* (no. 493); Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 15; Senart, *Légende du Bouddha*, p. 350; Kielhorn, *Deopara Inscr. of Vijayasena*, *Ep. Ind.*, I, p. 310; Meyer, *Trilogie*, I, p. 35; Mus, "Barabuḍur", *BEFEO*, XXX (1932), pp. 413, 417. It is interesting to remark in this connection that in olden times on Java, according to a generally observed rule, the banyan *(waringin kurung)* planted on the square *(alun-alun)* in front of the residential quarters of the regent *(bupati)* ought to have four branches (Cornets de Groot, *Tijdschrift v. Ned. Indië*, 1852, 2, p. 266).

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Needless to say, this conclusion may meet with grave objections. Not only is it contrary to elementary botanical principles to imagine the root of a plant to be placed on top of the stem of a tree, but it also conflicts with our own conception, based on earlier observations, according to which the mūla is the origin of all the plant's organs and the source from which they draw nourishment. With this conception the idea is incompatible that the wishing-tree's stem does not spring from the antefix-shaped ornament and recedes from it, but should grow towards it and end in it.

Can we explain this irregularity? Are we dealing here with an exception so striking and drastic that the rule in question is in danger of being disposed of? Or have we to blame ourselves for an imperfect observation followed by a premature conclusion?

That the latter is the case is made clear by the beautiful Barabuḍur-relief on Pl. 19. The scene pictured here is borrowed from the Gaṇḍa-vyūha and according to this text represents the visit of the merchant's son Sudhanakumāra to the monk Supratishṭhita.[27] The kalpataru at whose foot the latter is seated is stylized in the customary manner and decked out with the requisite ornaments and strings of jewels and bells. The top, however, shows the remarkable feature that the lower branches curve sharply downward, whereas the numerous lotus flowers which are visible among the foliage are all inverted, bending their faces towards the ground.

We shall revert to this point later on, but in the meantime we are even more interested in still another of the tree's characteristics. On close scrutiny the stem appears not to present the rounded semi-circular surface of ordinary trees represented in relief-sculpture but to be rectangular in cross-section. The top, moreover, has a projecting edge resembling the cornice of a pillar well-known in architecture.

Now the word 'pillar' makes it clear what the object, which at first we took for the stem of a tree, actually is: it is not a real stem but a wooden or stone pillar in whose top the root of the celestial tree has been implanted; in other words, this tree, true to nature, has been represented as a epiphyte settling on a foreign object (p. 70 ff.), in our case the pillar, and, just as the texts describe it, from this elevated place sends its branches and leaves 'downwards' *(avāk)* whereas the root is 'high' *(upari)*, 'in the bottomless space', as RV, I 24, 7 has it.

This case, obviously, is not an isolated one in Hindu-Javanese art. Once we have given our attention to the stem and its top we find a wide choice of wishing-trees whose tops are supported by pillars decorated

[27] N. J. Krom, *Barabuḍur*, I, pp. 492, 502.

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with a complete cornice or, at times, even by a complete capital (Pl. 22*b*). Often this capital has profiles with antefixes and festoons (so on the main walls of the chaṇḍi Meṇḍut) and in some cases the lower end of the stem rests on a profiled pedestal (Pl. 22*a*).

This conception is not restricted to Java but was also known in India as is shown by the well-known stone wishing-tree from Besnagar[28] (Pl. 18*b*) (near Sānchi, probably dating from the third century B.C.), a remarkable piece in this connection because as a detached sculpture it was originally the top of a tall stone pillar *(stambha)*, which makes it clear that the latter occupied the same place and served the same purpose as the post substituted for the stem of the wishing-tree in the Javanese reliefs.[29]

The above has provided us with an explanation of the pillar-like character of the stem but the fact remains that in most cases the stem has a round instead of a rectangular shape and is not topped by mouldings or any other architectural ornaments; in other words, there is no indication that the round column was meant to be anything else than an ordinary tree-stem.

What relation in these cases is there between the stem and the antefix-shaped root resting on it?

If we adhere to our theory about the place and the role of the root in the plant's organism then only one explanation is admissible: the tree in question is a combination of two different trees, *viz.* the fig-tree rooted in heaven and the lotus-tree sprung from the waters. The former, placed above, true to its epiphytic nature, has implanted its root — the triangular ornament — in the top of the stem of the tree-shaped lotus, causing this to decay totally except for the stem, after which with its own branches and leafage it formed a new top.

[28] Burgess gives the following description of this piece *(Anc. Mon. of Ind.*, II, p. 25): "In this sculpture it (*viz.* the kalpadruma) is represented as the Ficus Indica with pendent roots, from which wealth is dropping so abundantly in the form of square pieces of money, that the vessels below are full and overflowing. The head of the tree is nearly spherical, 3 feet 3 inches in diameter, and covered with the large leaves and small berries of the banian. The stems and pendent roots are represented on a cylindrical neck, dividing it into eight sections. In these are placed alternately what appear to be four bags tied round the necks, and four vessels filled with coins, all different — a shell standing on end, a full-blown lotus flower, a loṭā or water-pot; and between the shell and bag on its right, is a curious rounded shaft with leaves in straight lines pointed upwards. The trunks rise out of a cylindrical cage of basket-work..., which rests on the square abacus of the capital... The same sort of tree is represented twice on the right hand jamb of the north gate at Sāñchī."

[29] The tree-crowned pillar also served as an ornament on bronze Hindu-Javanese sacrificing dishes *(talams)*, Pl. 28*d*.

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The Basic Form

As will be demonstrated in a subsequent chapter, both the above-mentioned trees according to the Indian conception are closely grown together forming an indivisible cosmic unit, which does not, however, exclude either of them from having its own organs or from following its own habit of growing.

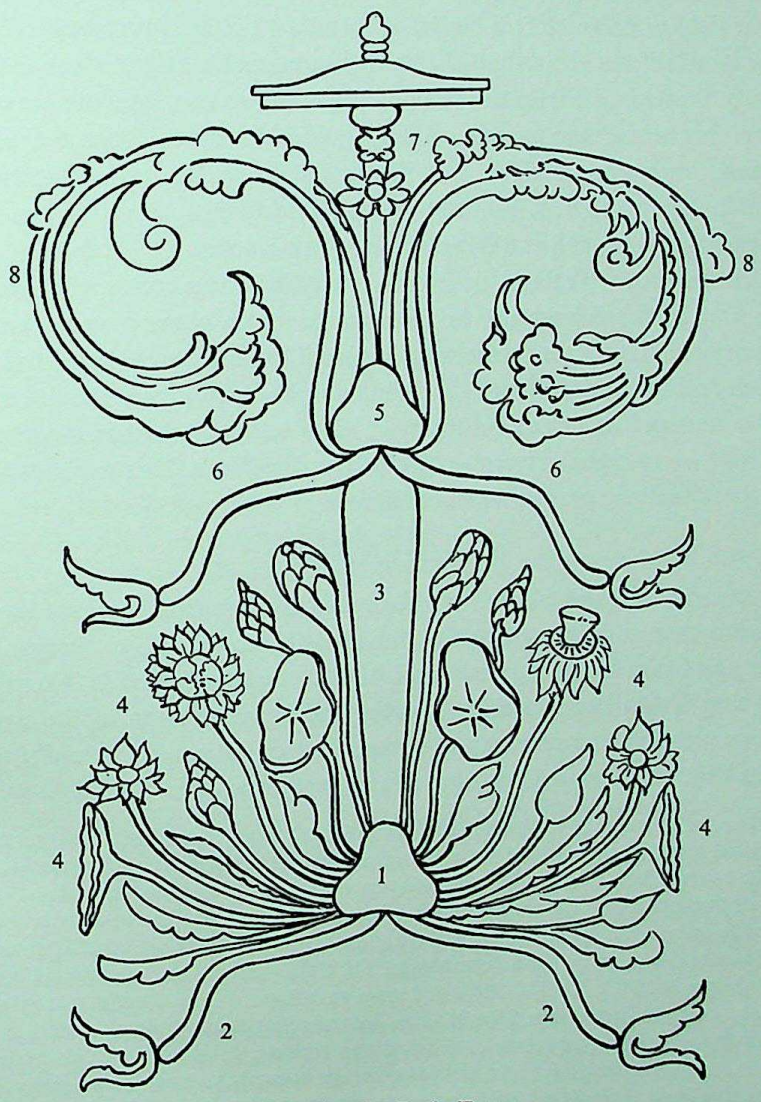

Fig. 11 The Basic Form.

1. The padmamūla. 2. Lateral branches. 3. The main stem. 4. Lotus vegetation. 5. The brahmamūla. 6. Lateral branches. 7. Central branch. 8. Main branches.

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On the organism of both trees art and literature give us the following information.

The chief organs of the lotus or terrestrial tree are: the root, padmamūla, with its two or four lateral branches, further the main stem (actually the rhizome) rising vertically from the mūla, and finally a great number of petioles and flower stalks also originating from the root and rising to the water's surface and growing above it.

The ficus or celestial Tree has its own root (which in future we shall call *brahmamūla*)[30] which is shaped like the padmamūla and in symbolism is usually treated in a similar manner. This mūla, too, has two or four lateral branches, but whereas the padmamūla, apart from the stem, produces numerous petioles and flower stalks, in the case of the brahmamūla the number of branches is restricted to three or five, *viz.* one vertical central branch and two or four main branches.

This has been sketched in fig. 11. Just like the pictures of wishing-trees this sketch allows of two interpretations, a planary and a three-dimensional one. In the former case both mūlas produce offshoots only to the left and to the right, but in the latter case they develop in the direction of the four points of the compass, or — if the compass has more subdivisions — in eight, sixteen or thirty-two directions. This explains why we mentioned two or four lateral branches.

The plan of creation

The scheme outlined above would be of little benefit if it proved to be no more than a means of getting an insight into the arboreal organism made up of two different plants. But it leads to far wider fields. From the foregoing it has become clear that the Indian conception of the world regards creation as a process of genesis and development virtually similar to that of an animated organism, a sprouting, growing, blossoming

[30] As the Indian name of this mūla to my knowledge has not been handed down, a term is required covering the roots of both fig trees figuring as celestial tree, *viz.* the aśvattha and the nyagrodha. The word *vanaspati-mūla* would be the most acceptable as both kinds of tree belong to the Indian 'lords of the forest', but for the sake of brevity I prefer the name *brahmamūla* borrowed from the Khmer inscription of Phimeanàkàs issued under the reign of kind Jayavarman VII (1181 - after 1200) which in Coedès' translation in *BEFEO*, XVIII (1918), p. 2 reads as follows: "Ô toi dont les racines sont Brahmā, dont le tronc est Śiva et dont les branches sont Vishṇu (*vrahma-mūla-śivaskandha-viṣṇuśākha*), ô éternel, roi des arbres, fortuné, refuge des êtres, donneur de fruits;..... Clignement des yeux, tremblement des sourcils, mauvais rêves, mauvaises pensées, ô Figuier (*aśvattha*), délivre de tous ces maux les êtres divins et humains." Cf. also Kāṭh. Up. VI, 1, and Maitr. Up. VI, 4, identifying the celestial tree and the Brahman, and Madhusūdana's commentary on Bhag. Gītā, XV 1-8, where the celestial tree is called Brahmavṛiksha.

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and fruit-bearing tree. The system of creation and the Tree thus being identical to the Indian mind, we are led to the assumption that the Basic Form as we deduced it from the works of art is at the bottom of creation and of all things created; that this form, as it were, represents the immutable divine plan according to which Life regularly fulfils its creative task both in the microcosm and the macrocosm, in the material and in the spiritual world.

So the Basic Form interpreted in this manner may provide us with the key not only to the Indians' conception of the structure of the microcosm in himself and the macrocosm round him but also to an explanation of the products of literature and art, in which these ideas have found their response or their tangible interpretation.

I hardly need to say that these remarks on the Basic Form are not yet based on facts but simply serve as a working hypothesis to help our further investigation. We shall have to find out to what extent this hypothesis can assist us, how far it can provide an explanation of certain phenomena in the Indian conception of life and world, in mythology and art, which so far have not found a satisfactory solution. In other words, it will have to prove its practical value in the same manner as the key applied for decoding a cipher.

This will make it necessary for us to enquire to what extent the microcosmic and the macrocosmic constitution of the universe correspond with the structure of the Basic Form and what are its essential elements corresponding with the component parts of this Form; which will have to be followed by a similar enquiry into the language of Indian symbolism, particularly where we are concerned with the creation of works of art.

Before we enter upon this task we shall do well to find a clearer definition for the rather vague relation between the two trees which will play such an important part in our future examination. Following this we shall deal with the Indian system of classification of which the tree-motif will appear to have been the basis.

B. THE TWO TREES

The lotus in the Indian conception of the world

"The lotus is the waters." In this brief formula Śat. Br. VII 4, 1, 8 reveals the gist of the significance the lotus-symbol had of old for the Indian. For these words mean: the lotus is *rasa*, is identical with the magic substance drawn from the waters which is virtually one with natural life itself, both

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when this life is a negation of sickness, old age and death, and when it manifests itself in the fertility of women, of fields and cattle, thus causing an abundance of offspring, crops, livestock and earthly riches.

This notion of the lotus as the very symbol of life risen from the waters lends a new aspect to the relation between this plant and other living creatures, particularly its fellow-plants. It has often been a cause of wonder that in art the lotus shows various irregularities. Not only is it sometimes stylized to the extent that it becomes unrecognizable but it also appears as a tree, moreover, it changes its organs and growth-habit for those of other plants. These strange abnormalities were sometimes attributed to the 'fancy' or the 'poetic licence' of the artists, but we are now able to regard them from the Indian point of view and to make them fit in a wider plan of Indian ideas and notions.

Our starting-point in this connection must be the fact that to the Indian all plants, just like all living creatures, are essentially related in so far as all are rooted in, and draw their sap from, the same life-giving source, the *rasa* of the waters. This rasa in its purest form being present in and being symbolized by the lotus, the water-plant par excellence *(abja)*, it follows that the lotus may assume, and also may produce, all forms of life, first of all those of its fellow-plants. This explains the twofold phenomenon that other plants may merge in the lotus and yield their organs to it without the lotus ceasing to be a lotus, and on the other hand that the lotus may manifest itself in other plants and transfer its attributes to them, externally by producing in them its own habit of growing and flowering, internally by changing them into producers of rasa.

The ficus in the Indian conception of the world

Our above remarks on the lotus may *mutatis mutandis* be applied to the celestial fig-tree. Because creative breath pervades the universe to its innermost depths just like the aquatic element, and because the essence of this breath, fire, is as much active in creating life as the water's essence, rasa, it is no wonder that just like the lotus the fig-tree may assume all forms of life, and particularly may change in other plants or cause them to merge in it. For these transformations both trees usually choose kindred plants, so in the case of the lotus the plants of an aquatic nature: nymphea, śamī, soma-plant and kuśa-grass, and in the case of the aśvattha the plants with a fiery nature: rauhiṇa, khadira, bilva, palāśa, pārijāta and jambu. Hence the phenomenon, not infrequent in mythology and art, that besides the lotus and the fig-tree the said plants may assume the function either of the terrestrial or of the celestial tree and that this substitution may be

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accompanied by transfer or exchange of certain forms, organs and characteristics.

Not only related plants may assume each other's functions and change places. The fact that both cosmic principles mingle and interbreed, or to put it symbolically, that both cosmic trees, lotus and fig, grow into each other, and are so closely interwoven as to form one organism, gave rise to a peculiar kind of representation showing both plants appropriating each other's growing habit and organs. I mention the following examples: The top of the Central-Javanese kalpatarus composed of two or more volutes and formed after the example of the lotus-spirals; the lotus-buds and flowers growing between the leaves of these celestial trees; the spiral scrolls growing in the manner of a lotus but showing leaves rarely borrowed from this plant but frequently from the aśvattha or similar 'fiery' plants.

I may make an additional remark on the separate appearance of each of the trees.

Although the shape of the tree as it appears in our fig. 11 resulting from the superposition of the celestial on the terrestial plant is the most complete and the most current in art, there are many examples of only one of the all-embracing cosmic principles having been represented by a tree, either lotus or fig, whereas the other, though present in the mind, has not been symbolized as a tree. In the next part of our examination we shall, therefore, have to deal with three ways of representing the cosmic tree, *viz.* as a lotus, as a ficus (aśvattha or banyan), or as a tree of the composite type.

C. THE INDIAN SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION

The planary system

In the preceding chapter we discussed the relation of the two cosmic trees to each other and to their fellow-plants. We now proceed to inquire into the place, according to Indian theory, of the organism of creation, conceived as a Tree, in its surroundings, *i.e.*, in the organization of the universe.

This organization may be reduced to a system of classification constructed on the lines of the Basic Form, having for its chief element the stem functioning as the axis of the system at whose top is to be found the Prajāpati-Brahman principle and at whose foot the aquatic element is situated.

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As the whole universe is said to emanate from the root of the Tree, the padmamūla, and is represented as a Tree filling the whole universe, it follows that each creature is thought to be a living part of the Tree and to occupy a definite place in the Tree's organism. Which place this is to be depends on the question which of the Agni- and Soma-substances, from whose fusing all creation sprang (p. 61), dominates and to what extent. If the Agni-substance preponderates, then the creature in question is placed on the right-hand side of the axis, at a distance corresponding with the Agni-element's preponderance. In the case of the Soma-substance dominating the same thing happens at the left-hand side.[31] In this manner not only living beings and inanimate objects, but also abstract notions like colours, senses, natural phenomena, seasons, professions, theoretically all that exists or can be imagined, is subjected to a system of classification which places the objects with Agni attributes to the right and those with Soma attributes to the left of the Tree's stem in such a manner that the contrasting parts of both groups are paired off. In this way the pairs of contrasts *(dvandva)* appear that are well-known from the Indian philosophic systems with a dualistic nature.

From the foregoing it follows that the eternal contrast between the two groups of forces which according to Indian theory dominate and sustain the world order is neutralized in the golden axis of the system on whose top Brahman in pure essence as perfect light is present (often symbolized as a diamond, a cristal, or similar object), at whose foot stretches the everlasting darkness of the primordial waters, and whose centre is occupied by the root, the place where the Agni- and Soma-substances have fused into one dual being and where the golden amṛita is produced.

This amṛita is represented now as the coveted thing for which both opposing forces wage deadly battle — Émile Senart: "Partout l'idée d'une lutte s'attache à la conquête de l'ambroisie"[32] — now as the supreme principle in which all contrasts are harmonized in a supreme unity and where the condition of highest bliss of the *dvandvātīta* (he who is beyond all contrasts) is attained.

The three-dimensional system

In drawing the above sketch of the Indian classification system, which is naturally far from complete and partly is only hypothetical, I started

[31] Here and in the following 'right' and 'left' are meant in the heraldic sense of the words.
[32] *Légende du Bouddha*², p. 190.

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from a representation of the Tree which shows branches and leaves growing only in two directions, to the right and to the left, this representation thus coinciding with a two-dimensional plane. There are, however, indications of the planary system being contrasted with another system based on a three-dimensional conception of the Tree organism. The Tree here appears as a symmetrical organism spreading in four directions whose axis in this case also is the stem rising vertically from the lotus-root. But from this axis now not a division into two but into four appears, corresponding with the four points of the compass towards which the main lateral organs of the plant are directed. This fourfold division is prominent in the nodal point where the stem splits into four branches and a fifth branch is thrust upwards. If we imagine the top of this branch to be joined to the ends of the four lower branches, a pyramidal figure appears, having the zenith as top and the four points of the compass at the basis, thus presenting a division into 4-5, or into 8-9, 16-17, 32-33 if the compass has been given more subdivisions.

It is generally known that the 4-5 division has been widely applied, and we only need to recall the system of the Jinas, *vulgo* Dhyānibuddhas, with its corresponding compass-points, mudrās, vehicles, attributes, senses, colours and elements, to appreciate the particular sacredness of this system of classification.

Not only with regard to dimension do the planary and the three-dimensional system differ but also in this respect that in the case of the former both groups of opposites are divided by a vertical axis, whereas in the case of the latter the division is effected by a horizontal plane passing through the centre of the padmamūla, as a result of which the contrast between the groups above and underneath this plane relates to the oneness of the centre-branch, respectively to the 3, 5, 9, 17, 33 branches of the celestial tree (p. 76), on the one side, and to the multitude or innumerableness of petioles and stalks of the terrestrial tree which are produced by the padmamūla, on the other side (fig. 11). In the first group, moreover, have been placed all things related to the celestial regions: light, the divine, and life, and in the second group the powers of the underworld: darkness, the demoniacal and death. Here, too, both powers are often engaged in deadly strife, this strife often taking the form of a contest, a courtship, a game of dice, the solution of a problem etc., and here also the stake is the golden elixir of life, respectively the object or being containing this elixir or by which it is symbolized.

As an illustration of the above remarks I may give three examples of the three-dimensional contrasting position of the two opposing groups.

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The first group is represented by the 33 (32+1) gods, residing in the celestial regions, and compared in AV X, 7, 38 with the branches of a tree round about the trunk. They are in everlasting combat with theasuras, the powers of darkness whose number according to the Brāhmaṇa-texts is countless.[33] The stakes are the possession of the amṛita.

Both groups are found again in the ancient myth of Kadrū and Vinatā said to date back from the beginning of creation *(devayuga)*. Kāśyapa, 'tortoise', a typical 'totality figure' as Kuiper calls him[34] and also a typical representative of the padmamūla as will appear later on, has two spouses, Vinatā, mother of Garuḍa, and Kadrū, mother of one hundred or countless nāgas. In both groups the cosmic contrast between heaven and underworld, light and darkness, celestial and terrestrial tree, has been symbolized: on the one hand we find Garuḍa, the sun-bird, representing the single stem or central branch of the celestial tree, on the other hand the multitude of nāgas, dwellers in the dark underworld representing the countless offshoots of the terrestrial tree. Garuḍa and nāgas are natural enemies and again the amṛita is the stake in this war to the death.

In the third place there is the contest between Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. That the gist of the narrative surrounding this contest is borrowed from the system of classification becomes most probable if we consider in the first place that of the two groups of cousins the former consists of five (4+1), the latter of one hundred (a number standing for an indefinite quantity); secondly, that the former are sons of gods, the latter incarnated demons (rākshasas), therefore representing respectively the heaven of light and the dark regions; thirdly, that Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas sprang from the same pair of ancestors, *viz.* the brahmin Parāśara, the embodiment of the Brahman element, and Satyavatī born of a fish, the personification of the aquatic element; and, finally, that the rivalry between the two groups culminates in the game of dice at Hastināpura and later in the battle in

[33] Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice*, p. 42.

[34] In his discussion of this passage (*BKI*, 75, p. 107) Kuiper has this important remark: "A striking peculiarity of Kadrū (Aditi) is that in the Suparṇa-legend she is called one-eyed *(kāṇā)*. This feature, the real point in her contest with Vinatā in keen-sightedness, is certainly old. A parallel in the epic is not only that the father of the one hundred Kauravas (bearing the name of a serpent deity, Dhṛitarāshṭra) is blind but also that the mother Gāndhārī at her wedding blinds herself symbolically by covering her eyes with a cloth. This fact, hardly motivated in the epic (Mbh. 1, 110, 14, Bomb.), becomes intelligible if we consider Gāndhārī as an equivalent of Kadrū and her blindness as an indispensable characteristic not understood by later poets." May we suppose that the blindness is meant to symbolize the darkness of the underworld represented by Kadrū and Gāndhārī?

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the Kurukshetra both of which occurrences in all probability have the struggle for the amṛita as a leading motif.

Taking these four points into consideration we may sum up the underlying symbolic idea of the mythological Mahābhārata epic as being a continuous comparison between the origin, the growth and the condition of the Tree organism and those of the famous race of heroes: just as the entering into the waters of the Brahman element produces the Germ from which rises the Tree, so from the union of the brahmin Parāśara and the water-nymph Satyavatī sprang Vyāsa, the ancestor of Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. And just as the cosmic tree consists of two sharply divided and contrasting parts, *viz.* the celestial tree with five main branches and the terrestrial tree with countless offshoots, so the race of the Bhāratas divides into two diametrically opposed groups, on the one side the five Pāṇḍavas born out of the inhabitants of the heaven of light, on the other the innumerable Kauravas, sons of the demoniacal powers of darkness. And just as at the nodal point between the two halves of the tree the elixir of life is to be found, this same elixir figures as the stake of the deadly strife between Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas.

G. J. Held deserves credit for being the first to connect the contrast between Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas with the Indian system of classification and to make this the centre of his interpretation of the epic.[35] His theory mainly corresponds with mine although his starting-point, the tribal organisation, differs from mine, which is the Tree-motif. It is worth noticing that this system of classification also underlies the old-Javanese representation of the two hostile groups found for instance in the Korawāśrama. On this point Swellengrebel remarks:[36] "Both groups are bitterly opposed. But no less important than this motif is the other one: they are each other's counterparts and indispensable completion . . . The equilibrium between the groups should ever be maintained. If the Korawas have been humiliated they shall have their revenge on the Pāṇḍawas; but not by killing them, as the Pāṇḍawas, too, are indispensable. How could things be right with the universe without the existence of Korawas and Pāṇḍawas who fill the whole world . . . .? According to the system of classification current in our text [the Korawāśrama], the Korawas are connected with the South, the scarlet colour (which is theirs also in the wayang), with demons, fire and devastation. . . . . The place of the Pāṇḍawas in the system is clear from the contrast with the Korawas . . ". Perhaps we may see in the Pāṇḍawas the celestial phratry, in the Korawas the terrestrial or underworld phratry.

With regard to the above supposed connection between the two main elements in the epic and the struggle for the amṛita, I only mention here that of old the Kurukshetra, the 'land of the Kurus,' situated in the plain west of the

[35] *The Mahābhārata. An Ethnological Study* (1935).
[36] *Korawāçrama*, 1930, pp. 25* ff.

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Gaṅgā and Yamunā, between the rivers Sarasvatī and Dṛishadvatī, had an odour of sanctity about it and is often referred to as the land where the gods themselves performed their sacrificial rites (Śat. Br. IV 1, 5, 13; XI 5, 1, 4; XIV 1, 1, 2; Taitt. Ār. V 1, 1). The connection between this land and immortality is shown in Mbh. IX 53, relating how Kuru, engaged in ploughing the field, was promised by the god Indra that all who would dwell, sacrifice or fall in battle there would be admitted to heaven. The connection is even more distinct in the legend according to which in the Kurukshetra there was the lake Śaryaṇāvant, famous for the powerful rasa of its waters, and that nearby there was a mountainous region from which in Vedic times Soma plants were obtained.[37]

In conclusion, I may point out that in the planary system of classification Gaṅgā is connected with 'left' and Yamunā with 'right'[38] corresponding with the notions of 'underneath' and 'above' in the three-dimensional system. In this connection Dr. Kuiper remarked.[38a] :". . . in later texts the 'right-hand' Yamunā is called the daughter of the sun *(tapana-duhitar)* and that the 'left-hand' Gaṅgā is said to flow down from the moon on to Śiva's forehead. Now it strikes us that the ancient city of the Kauravas lies on the Ganges (and so is connected with 'moon', 'left' and 'underneath') and is called the city of elephants (Hastināpura), the elephant being a typical animal of the underworld in Indian mythology, and that the younger city of the Pāṇḍavas was founded on the Yamunā, (thus being associated with the 'sun', 'right', 'above') and is called Indraprastha after the protagonist of the 'celestial phratry'. This clearly shows that the region of Kurukshetra encircled by the two rivers, and in a wider sense also Madhyadeśa, the 'middle land', was looked upon as the cosmic centre. In this connection it is worth mentioning that the sacred city Varāhatīrtha (Mbh III 83, 18) or Lokoddhāratīrtha (III 83, 45) was situated here, that means that here the cosmic wild boar raised the first earth from the primeval waters so that here was thought to be the earth's navel".

There is no need to dwell here on the relation between dice-playing and amṛita because it involves certain symbolic notions which can better be discussed in another connection. I may, however, refer the reader to Held's detailed discussion on the game of dice as a sacred rite (*op. cit.*, p. 243 ff.).

A final remark should be made here on the parallel between the Mahābhārata epic and the Tree-motif. It seems probable that future examination will reveal something in the nature of a personal relation between each individual Pāṇḍava and a special branch of the Tree. Yudhishṭhira, the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas and son of Dharma, may be identified with the centre branch as this can be taken as an immediate continuation of the stem which in its turn is rooted in the padmamūla of which Dharma is a manifestation, as we shall see later on. The twins Nakula and Sahadeva, sons of the Aśvins, are surely identical with the two main-branches — associated with east and west? — which in the Javanese *gunungan* are closely connected with the twin aśvin animals. This point is also held over for future discussion. Finally, it should be noticed that the marriage of the five Pāṇḍavas with the one common spouse runs parallel with the five

[37] A. Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.*, II, p. 279; R. Pischel, *Ved. Stud.*, 2, p. 217; K. Rönnow, *Trita Āptya*, p. 87.

[38] Avalon, *Mahānirvāṇatantra*, p. CXXXIV.

[38a] In his review *BKI*, 107, p. 76.

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main-branches of the Tree being rooted in the one common mūla, these branches being taken to represent an equal number of phalli meeting in one vulva.[39]

Contamination of the two systems

As the two systems of classification discussed just now have been concurrent it is not surprising that the same object or living being has frequently been classed in both. As part of the planary system it is subject to classification according to the basic two-three division, but as a component of the three-dimensional system it also shares in a classification that presents a twofold contrast, in the first place with the diametrically opposite object in the plane (*e.g.* in the case of Dhyānibuddhas: east-west, blue-red, etc.), secondly, with the vertically opposite object or complex of objects which is situated on the other side of the dividing plane passing through the padmamūla. Needless to say that this has caused many complications and embarrassments. Particularly a disturbing influence on the none too lucid relation between the symbols of the Agni and of the Soma class is unmistakable. On the other hand, the classification according to two systems frequently offers an explanation of seeming discrepancies in the colours, attributes, qualities, etc. of deities and other mythological figures.

A few examples may serve as an illustration. The two-dimensional system has a disposition showing to the left of the stem Iḍā, the nāga, the moon, the pale colour, and Gaṅgā, and correspondingly to the right Piṅgalā, Garuḍa, the sun, the red colour, and Yamunā.[40] However, the nāga, here being white or pale-coloured, is also part of the four-fivefold system of world guardians where he belongs to the retinue of the western Virūpāksha and shows a red colour. Opposite him is the group of gandharvas who in their turn are white. Finally, there is the division referred to before having Garuḍa at the top and the serpents at the foot of the stem, the relation between both powers being that between oneness and multitude, light and darkness, divine and demoniac. The colour of the nāga in this case is dark or black.

Many more of these examples could be given. The following two quotations clearly show the complications resulting from the concurrence of the two systems in India.

After dealing with the Siamese organisation of the state and the court based on the four points of the compass R. von Heine-Geldern remarks:[41] "This division

[39] Cf. the curious custom related by J. Charpentier, "Über den Begriff und Etymologie von pūjā", *Festgabe Jacobi*, 1916, p. 286: "In the Himālayas the five Pāṇḍavas are often called Panjpīr and sometimes regarded as a single person. Not infrequently, however, they are worshipped in the shape of five stones placed under a pipal and smeared with red lead." Cf. also *Punjab Notes and Queries*, III, p. 159; and H. A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab*, I, p. 121.

[40] Avalon, *Mahānirvāṇatantra*, p. CXXXIV.

[41] "Weltbild und Bauform in Südostasien", *WBKKA, IV* (1930), p. 32 f.

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of state and court according to the four points of the compass which came to India from the ancient east, in Siam gave way to another division also originating in India and based on the principles 'right' and 'left'. The expressions 'right' and 'left' refer to the king when he is sitting on his throne . . . The two systems may be traced to two currents of civilisation, which probably met not only in South-East Asia but already in India and which need further examination. Both had a marked influence on the architecture of Further India and their deepseated contrast has led to various compromises and solutions deviating from the theoretic ideal both in the organisation of state and court and in architecture."

The second quotation is from Swellengrebel's Korawāśrama[42]: "Apart from these classifications [based on the four-five and the eight-nine division] there is a representation referred to once in the Korawāśrama and bearing the name of '*tyas ning tiga*' (the kernel, the essence of the three). We find there a description of Śiva: standing in the centre of the cosmos he holds in his left hand a censer with fire and in his right a jar filled with water of life.[43] With the fire he consumes everything, with the water he gives life to all living beings. Śiva's attributes appear to be borrowed from the Southern and from the Northern group. The four-five division evidently has been reduced to a two-three division of which Śiva is the centre."

D. THE PLAN OF CREATION IN THE MICROCOSMOS

It is a generally known fact, not requiring a detailed discussion here, that just like other ancient peoples the Indians considered the human body to be organized on similar lines as the cosmic organism, the macrocosmos being reflected in the microcosmos, knowledge of the one implying understanding of the other. This belief found expression in the words: "That which is here is elsewhere; that which is not here is nowhere."[44] Up to now, however, the interpretation of this notion was based on the premise that the macrocosmic world-conception was the primary source from which the microcosmic conception sprang and that they were related in the same manner as cause and effect. We may, however, now advocate the view that the two ideas are each other's counterpart having sprung from the one common source of ideas, the idea of the cosmic Tree.

In order to make this acceptable for the microcosmic system we should first distinguish between the internal anatomy of the human body and its external build, because the latter later on will appear to be related to the Basic Form in a way different from the former.

[42] *Op. cit.*, p. 32* f.

[43] According to a generally observed rule fire emblems are held in the right hands of deities, water symbols in the left hands. An exchange of these attributes is so unusual that I regard an error in the manuscript as likely.

[44] *Viśvasāratantra*, in Avalon, *Mahānirvāṇatantra*, p. XLV.

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With regard to the internal anatomy we shall restrict ourselves to the main points comparable with the vegetal prototype.[45]

The main organ in the human body is the *mūlādhāra,* literally the 'root-stool'. It is situated in the lowermost body cavity between the sexual organ and the anus, is shaped like a four-leaved lotus and serves as a support for the *meru,* the spine or body-axis. From this mūlādhāra a great number of *nāḍīs,* arteries of vital energy, spread in all directions, the three principal ones being called *sushumṇā, iḍā* and *piṅgalā.* The first one pierces the meru from bottom to top and connects the mūlādhāra with the cranium. This artery contains at regular intervals seven *chakras,* centres of vital energy, also called *granthis,* another name for parvan. They are represented as lotus-flowers with an increasing number of petals starting with the four petals of the mūlādhāra and ending up with the thousand petals of the *sahasrārapadma* or cranium-lotus.

The other two main arteries, iḍā and piṅgalā, are outside the meru. They spring from either side of the mūlādhāra and wind round the meru — in the same manner as Mercury's caduceus is entwined by two serpents — and have their outlet through the nostrils, iḍā through the left and piṅgalā through the right nostril.

On the thousand-leaved lotus Paramaśiva sits enthroned beneath the cranium, his Śakti, the Mahādevī, having adopted the shape of the serpent Devī Kuṇḍalinī, the 'coiling one'. When dormant she resides in the mūlādhāra and by means of her serpent-body coiled three-and-a-half times she blocks the entrance to the sushumṇā.

This organisation of the human body is utilized by the yogin when, practising the Haṭha-yoga, he endeavours to bring about the union of Śiva and the Devī Kuṇḍalinī. After being roused from her slumbers by means of prāṇāyāma, mantras, mudrās and such like, the Devī rises from her residence in the mūlādhāra, thereby clearing the entrance to the sushumṇā. She then follows the 'royal route' upwards, piercing the six chakras she meets on her way, appropriating and absorbing their energies, after which she joins her lord Paramaśiva. The *maithuna* of this divine couple produces amṛita which overflows the yogin's body and bestows on him a state of supreme bliss.

What has a comparison of this system with the Tree-organism to tell us?

Irrespective of the natural differences between the shape and the organism of the human body and those of a tree or plant, the points of resemblance between the microcosmic system and the Tree-motif are

[45] Avalon, *Mahānirvāṇatantra,* p. XXVI, LV, LVII, CXXXII; and *Serpent Power*[2], passim.

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numerous and striking enough to put the dependence of the former on the latter beyond doubt. A few remarks will make this clear.

The anatomy of the human body obviously corresponds with the planary image of the Tree-organism. The mūlādhāra corresponds with the padmamūla, the sushumṇā with the stem rising from this mūla, iḍā and piṅgalā with the two lateral branches also emerging from the padmamūla and winding upwards (see in particular Pl. 13*d*), whereas the chakras or granthis are the equivalents of the parvans on account of their particular lotus-shape referred to before (p. 42). Moreover, in the microcosmic system Paramaśiva occupies the same place as the Brahman-Prajāpati principle in the myths of creation, whereas the Devī Kuṇḍalinī acting as nāgī, the pre-eminently aquatic animal, symbolizes the feminine element of the waters on which the universe is founded.[46]

In conclusion, the fact that the union of Śiva and Devī produces the elixir of immortality quite agrees with the notion we have met already that this elixir is created through the union of the two primeval elements.

According to the Chinese author Chou Ta-Kuan, a 13th-century Khmer legend has the following story:[47]

In the king's palace there is a golden tower on the top of which the king sleeps. All the natives believe that in that tower there is the soul of a nine-headed serpent, master of the soil of the whole kingdom. Every night this nāgī appears in the shape of a woman and with her the king sleeps and unites . . . If one night the soul of the nāgī does not appear, it means that the moment of the king's death has come. If the king once fails to come, a disaster will happen.

It is evident that the marriage described here which takes place on the top of a tower and is consummated between the king and a nāgī is the terrestial reflection of the divine marriage of Paramaśiva and the serpent-like Devī which also takes place on the summit of a tower (the human spine, or meru). The story has the interesting detail that the ruler is sure to die if the nāgī does not appear but that disaster will hold off as long as the ruler and the nāgī cohabitate regularly, this feature being, of course, closely connected with the notion of the union of the two primeval elements producing the amṛita which prolongs life and protects from evil influences.

A curious parallel of this story is found on Java.[48] In the 'kraton', or palace of the principality Surakarta which until recently was a sovereign state, a five-storied tower is to be found called Panggung Sanggabuwana. According to an

[46] In the *Mañjubhūshaṇī* it is said: "I praise constantly the Kuṇḍalinī, who creates innumerable worlds continuously... and who resides at the root of the tree (Mūlādhāra), to be roused and led (to Sahasrāra)", quoted by Avalon, *Serpent Power*[2], p. 272.

[47] P. Pelliot, *BEFEO*, II (1902) p. 144 f.

[48] Dr. Ch. Hooykaas, lecturer in London University, obligingly drew my attention to this parallel.

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ancient usage upheld until the Japanese invasion, the ruler at variable intervals, *e.g.* in the face of ominous natural phenomena, went to the top story — which unlike the lower stories was closed to the public — to have intercourse with Nyai (or Ratu) Lara Kidul, the legendary queen of the Pacific. So here, too, we encounter the idea of a marriage of two divine beings, one from heaven and the other from the realm of the waters, a marriage which is made on the top of a tower and is intended to ward off disaster.

E. THE PLAN OF CREATION IN THE MACROCOSMOS

Vedic conceptions

When we ask to what extent the macrocosmic system was also based on the Tree-motif we shall have to take full account of the fact that there is no ground whatever for the assumption that the vast cosmic systems of brahmanist, buddhist and jainist origin, parading a mass of learned details about the skies, the atmosphere, the earth, the orbits of sun, moon or stars, the oceans and continents, mountains and rivers, peoples and cities — that all this in any manner should be related to the Tree-motif, let alone be derived from it. It is, however, one thing to dismiss this assumption and another to deny the possible existence of an ancient nucleus of cosmic conceptions, deducible to Vedic times, which do prove this relation; this nucleus, not yet adapted to brahmanist, buddhist or jainist tradition but the joint possession of all Aryan Indians, being manifest in myths, legends and works of art which are not, or only slightly, influenced by cosmic ideas with scholarly pretensions.

When examining the connections between cosmos and Tree-motif we shall, therefore, first appeal to literature and art. As this can only be done satisfactorily at a later stage when we have become acquainted with various symbols of the Tree-motif, we shall for the present restrict ourselves to an indication of the chief points of resemblance between the two systems. Subsequently, this sketch through the addition of further details will develop into a more complete picture.

One of the oldest and most important elements in the Indian world system is the cosmic or celestial axis, *stambha* or *skambha,* which we met already in our discussion of RV X 82, 6 and RV I 164, 13 (p. 55). As we remember, these verses mention a primeval being represented in a human shape, dwelling in the middle of the waters and from whose navel rises The One, the origin of creation and of all created things.

According to another Vedic notion heaven and earth are both kept apart and joined by a support or pillar. So RV X, 89, 4 compares both

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hemispheres with cart wheels connected by an axle and RV VIII, 41, 10 says: "He who divides heaven and earth by a pillar, just as the unborn one supported the heaven, made the first dwelling-place."

The same axis or pillar, under the name Skambha, is worshipped in the mystical and obscure hymns AV X, 7 and 8 as the primeval element, the first-born, the bearer and embracer of all things, the one elevated above darkness and evil, occupying the place of the former Prajāpati, Purusha and Brahman notions.

In X, 7, it is said: 8. What was the highest, lowest, and what was midmost Prajāpati created, of all forms — by how much did Skambha enter there? what did not enter, how much was that? 9. By how much did Skambha enter the existent? how much of him lies along that which will exist? 12. In whom earth, atmosphere, and sky is set, where fire, moon, sun, wind stand fixed, that Skambha tell me: which forsooth is he? 13. In whose member all the thirty-three gods are set together, — that Skambha etc. 20. From whom they fashioned off the verses, from whom they scraped off the sacrificial formula, of whom the chants are the hairs, the Atharvans and Aṅgirases the mouth — that Skambha etc.[49] 28. People know the golden embryo as highest, not to be overcrowed; the Skambha in the beginning poured forth that gold within the world. 32. Of whom earth is the basement and atmosphere the belly; who made the sky his head — to that chief Brahman be homage. 38. A great being *(mahadyaksham)* in the midst of the world having gone in penance on the back of the sea — in it are set whatever gods there are, like the branches of a tree roundabout the trunk.

As Skambha or The One are only different names for the element elsewhere called Brahman, Prajāpati or Purusha and as the manifested form of this element is Agni (p. 58), it is not surprising that the god of fire, too, is said to separate heaven and earth by means of a pillar (RV I 67, 5; VI 8, 3); or to support the firmament with his flames or pillar of smoke (RV III 5, 10; III 4, 6) or elsewhere is identified directly with a pillar (IV 5, 1). Like the Skambha of AV X 7 and The One of RV X 82, 6, Agni, too, is compared and identified with a cosmic tree (VI 3, 1; VIII 19, 33; IX 5, 10).

[49] To his translation of this verse M. Lindenau adds the following remark *(Zeitschrift f. Indol. u. Iranistik,* III (1925), p. 247): "*apātakṣan* 'they cut off' and *apākaṣan* 'they planed off' indicate the representation of a tree. There is also mention of 'leaves' *(lomāni)* and in V 21 of a 'branch' *(śākhā)*. We have here an etymological allusion to *skambha,* connected with *skab, skabh* (idg. doubles), lat. *scabo* 'to plane'. Originally *skambha* appears to have had the meaning of 'a trimmed tree trunk' which developed into the notion of 'pillar' or 'support'. In any case the foregoing shows that the poet connected with the skambha the idea of 'tree trunk".

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The Mahāmeru

The above remarks give rise to the important question whether the Vedic notions about the stambha were maintained in the post-Vedic world system and if so, what relation there is between this stambha and the Mahāmeru, the cosmic mountain which, as axis of the universe and celestial pillar, occupied in this system an equally important and central place as the former stambha.

To answer this question we turn our attention to two traditions which, although recorded at a relatively late date, bear all the marks of great ancientness.

The first of these traditions has been recorded in the Deopara inscription (Rājshāhī district, Bengal). It dates back to the close of the eleventh century and was issued by king Vijayasena.[50] Its 26th strophe runs as follows:

That ruler of the world (Vijayasena) built a high temple of Pradyumneśvara (which resembles) the (central) mountain whereupon the sun rests at noon (in the same way) as it touches the eastern and western mountains It is the (central) mountain (that is like) the trunk of a tree *(mūlakāṇḍa)* of which the branches are the quarters and that stands between the vault of heaven and the middle of the ocean.[51] It is the unique column of support *(ālambastambha)* of the three worlds, and the unique representative of all mountains.

This strophe is remarkable for various reasons. Not so much on account of the royal temple being identified with the Meru, for this is not unusual and deserves no special mention. The main thing is that, with a distinct allusion to the *(tad) ekam* of RV X 129, 2-3 and X 82, 6 (cf. p. 51 ff.), the mountain in question is called *eka ālambastambha,* the sole support erected between the centre of the ocean and the firmament, and thereby occupies the same place and has the same function as the Ṛigvedic stambha. Furthermore, on the top of this stambha the sun settles in the zenith of its course, a notion we will meet again in the next story and which will be an object for later discussion. Meanwhile, the most important feature about the inscription is that, instead of the mere allusion in AV X 7, 38; RV X 82, 6 and RV I 164, 13 we here have the

[50] F. Kielhorn, "*Deopara inscription of Vijayasena,*" *Epigr. Ind.*, I, pp. 310 ff.; P. Mus, *Barabuḍur*, pp. 412, 423 ff.

[51] I prefer this translation of *gaganatalamahāmbhodhimadhyānatarīyam* to that of Kielhorn "its middle is clad by the great sea of heaven", and to that of Mus "qui est placée au milieu du Grand Océan (retenu au-dessus de nous) par la voûte céleste" neither of which give good sense.

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clear statement that the stambha or axis of the universe, identified with the cosmic mountain, is also identical with the trunk of the world-tree, called *mūlakāṇḍa* here.

Before proceeding with our conclusions we may dwell for a moment on the second of the two above-mentioned traditions, *viz.* the 18th story from the well-known story-book Vikramacharita, also called Siṃhāsana-dvātriṃśikā, "the thirty-two stories of the throne". Here a high mountain is mentioned bearing on its top a mountain-lake from whose centre rises a golden column bearing a golden throne decorated with various jewels. Then it says: "From sunrise to noontime the column rises gradually till it reaches the disc of the sun and after that it sinks little by little till at sundown it touches the water again. This happens day by day."

Evidently, the pillar serving here as solar standard stands for the same stambha mentioned in the Deopara inscription. However, the story has the important additional detail that the column is placed on a high mountain as on a pedestal, or rather figures as a mountain top that can be pushed out telescope-wise. Combining this feature with the identity of stambha and tree-trunk just established we have now adequate material for answering our above question about the relation between stambha and Meru. This relation appears to be that the top (stambha) rises from the mountain (Meru) in a similar manner as the stem of the tree-like cosmic lotus rises from the padmamūla; in other words, the mountain top, or world pillar, is thought of as being detached from the cosmic mountain, yet as being united with it in that it issues from the base of the Meru, pierces the mass of the mountain from the bottom upwards, and finally emerges at the top, just as the lotus-stem rises from the bottom of the padmamūla, pierces the mūla-body and grows above it (Pl. 16*d*).[52]

Our comparison now permits this important conclusion that the Meru is the macrocosmic equivalent of the padmamūla, just as the Meru-top is the equivalent of the lotus-stem. Later on we shall corroborate this conclusion in various respects, but in the meantime I wish to mention the following four points of resemblance between Meru and mūla.

1. First there is the fact that the jewel-shape, characteristic both for the padmamūla and for the central or nose-part of the kāla-motif,

[52] Cf. also the initial stanza of the Daśakumāracharita in which the world pillar is called *daṇḍa* (an allusion to the author's name Daṇḍin), and is invoked in its various appearances. Of these the most important are: *śatadhṛitibhavanāmbhoruhanāladaṇḍa* 'the lotus stalk of Brahmā's birth', *jyotiśchakrākshadaṇḍa* 'the staff of the axle of the luminous disk (the sun), *tribhuvanavijayastambhadaṇḍa* 'he staff of the pillar of victory of the three worlds'. So here, too, the lotus stalk (as the stem of the world tree), the solar standard, and the stambha of the universe are identified one with the other.

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(p. 42), has of old in Indian art been used to symbolize the mountain in general and the Meru in particular.

2. Apart from their shape, Meru and mūla also correspond as to colour and substance. The cosmic mountain is said to shine like gold, to have the colour of gold, or to be made of pure gold, on the other hand the mūla is the receptacle for the golden amṛita elixir and contains the Germ of Life, Hiraṇyagarbha.

3. Let us now consider Meru and mūla in their surroundings. One of the best known myths in which the world-mountain plays a part is that of the churning of the milk-sea by gods and demons. Leaving out irrelevant details we concentrate on the graphic picture, the visual image which the amṛitamanthana-story would call up in the minds of the listeners. It is the image of that mighty occurrence in which the cosmic tortoise with its spherical carapace serves as a support having on its back the world-mountain — here called Mandara — for a churning staff, whilst gods and demons pull the world-serpent at either end, the latter being wound round the mountain in the manner of a churning rope.

Now it appears that the component parts of this picture one by one correspond with the main elements of the Tree-organism: the tortoise is the equivalent of the padmamūla, the mountain-top of the stem rising from that mūla, and the serpent's body appearing at both sides correspond with the two side-branches springing from the mūla. In a word, everything represented in the amṛitamanthana-myth by cosmic elements appears in the vegetal plan as a part of the lotus organism.

This explanation would no doubt carry more weight if it were based on the symbolic equivalence of padmamūla and tortoise, lotus-stalk and serpent body — which will be the subject of future discussion — but pending this, the relation between the amṛitamanthana-myth and the lotus can be elucidated from a different angle.

For this purpose let us examine the Khmer relief shown in Pl. 48. In the middle of the base, on a small elevation — no doubt the remnant of the tortoise — we notice the cosmic mountain, alias churning staff, standing up. This object shows the remarkable feature that it supports a lotus-cushion bearing a deity and so is evidently meant for a lotus-stem.[53]

[53] On the numerous Khmer and Cham reliefs representing the churning of the ocean, the churning staff is rarely pictured as a mountain (this is the case in the eastern galery of the temple of Angkor Vat, see *Mém. archéol. publ. par l'EFEO, Le Temple d'A. V.*, Pl. 360). Mostly the mountain appears as a lotus stalk or tree, or as a column, cf. L. Finot, *BCAI*, 1912, p. 190: "Dans le pavillon d'angle Sud-Ouest (d'Angkor Vat) la montagne est remplacée par un arbre: cette seconde forme de la scène est fréquente au

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From the same elevation, moreover, emerge four more stalks bearing buds and leaves, whereas the cosmic serpent which is seen being moved backward and forward by two gods on either side, reveals itself as a lotus stalk as well, this being proved by its head and tail in the form of lotus buds. So the lotus here appears to have been used as a contrivance for the production of the elixir of immortality *(amṛitayantra)*, each of the plant's organs having its counterpart on the cosmic level.

4. Finally, we may point out the identical circumstances surrounding the production of the amṛita by the lotus and by the cosmic mountain. In the case of the plant this is effected by the padmamūla drawing the rasa (or amṛita) from the waters, and in the myth by the mountain churning the amṛita from the milk-sea. In either case the liquid product is thought of as the 'essence', the 'cream' of the lifeless, watery liquid in which the operation started.

The relation between Meru and amṛita is expressed in a slightly different manner in Javanese tradition. According to the Tantu Panggelaran[54], the elixir is produced by the mountain itself which is thought of as a kind of reservoir of amṛita.[55]

The Korawāśrama, too, has this idea. It says[56]: "The island of Java became stabilized through the jewel-crested golden mountain giving vital energy to the island . . . No mountain was his equal, his body being gold. But . . . the vital powers of the mountain Mahāmeru became exhausted. The elixir of immortality poured from its cracks and became the intoxicating liquor beloved of men."

Our conclusion is that the nucleus of the post-Vedic conception of the world is formed by the Mahāmeru, the macrocosmic replica of the padmamūla, and that the top rising from it serves both as the axis of the universe and as the pillar of the firmament, its counterpart in the vegetal scheme being the stem of the cosmic tree.

Cambodge. L'imagination des sculpteurs ne s'est pas arrêtée en si beau chemin: sur un fronton du Prah Vihar la montagne est remplacée par une colonne, dont la base en forme de cloche repose sur le dos de la tortue."

[54] Th. Pigeaud, *De Tantu Panggelaran*, 1924, pp. 210 ff.

[55] W. F. Stutterheim, "Oost-Java en de Hemelberg" (East Java and the Mountain of Heaven), *Djâwâ*, VI (1926), p. 340.

[56] Swellengrebel, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

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IV

INDIAN SYMBOLISM

A. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

After having enquired into the correspondence of the microcosmic and the macrocosmic world conceptions with the structure of the Basic Form, we proceed to seek factual corroboration of our second hypothesis: that this Form may provide the key to the interpretation of a certain group of symbolic conceptions in art and literature.

Before starting on this line I submit a few introductory remarks on Indian symbolism in general and on the laws governing it in particular. As for the latter, our starting-point is the plausible supposition that just as in daily parlance the use of a well-defined vocabulary and adherence to accepted grammatical and syntactic rules is essential if the speaker wishes to be understood, so the Indian artist who availed himself of the language of symbolism was subjected to a set of well-defined precepts and rules that ought to be well known and correctly understood not only by himself who, as a poet, a sculptor or a painter, partook in the act of symbolization, but just as well by the listeners and observers whom the products of his imagination were intended to serve.

We shall endeavour to formulate some of these rules so as to have a guiding principle, to be put to the test again and again for our future examination.

Substitution

A first ample source of variations on the Tree-motif lies in the possibility of substituting each part of the Basic Form — as we reconstructed it on p. 79 — by a symbol *(pratīka)*, or to replace a number of parts in the same manner. In the latter case more or less complicated symbolic systems are produced whose component parts are related in the same way as the organs of the Tree from which they are derived.

The following rule can be observed in this matter: only such objects

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may be used as a symbol that either on account of their external appearance, or on account of their internal properties, or on account of both, are identical with, or closely related to, the part of the Tree that is to be replaced.

The first of these criteria — the similarity of external appearance — needs no more detailed discussion. We are dealing here with the same phenomenon that we observed already in the metamorphosis of parvan into makara, of stem into toraṇa-post, and of mūla into kāla: the Indian was apt to recognize in various organs of the Tree certain objects or beings of a similar shape. He 'saw' these objects or beings in the Tree-organs and invested them with an existence of their own more or less independent of the vegetal substratum, and then as symbols substituted them for those organs.

A few examples may be given here already. Objects, animals, human beings and parts of the body that are rotund and plump are particularly suited to serve as symbols of the mūla which is round by nature. On the other hand, only objects and living beings with a naturally elongated and thin shape are used for replacing the stem, or branches, or stalks of the plant.

The other criterium — similarity of internal qualities — is connected with the Agni and Soma-characteristics we discussed before. Exponents of these characteristics are particularly those objects or beings in whose nature dominates either Agni's character as revealed by certain habits, activities and ways of behaviour (p. 61), or the nature of the waters as evidenced by the fact that these beings are aquatic or prefer to live in the water or appear to have qualities characteristic of the aquatic element (pp. 52, 60).

The first group generally provides symbols that are substitutes for the organs of the celestial tree, the latter substitutes for the parts of the lotus, whilst a third category, the largest, that of the twofold-equivalent symbols, possesses both Agni and Soma qualities and so can perform either task.

In view of the foregoing it is not surprising that specially those objects and beings that answer both criteria, being both externally and internally related to the part of the plant that is to be replaced, are considered to answer fully the requirements of the symbolic purpose. They are preferred to the uni-equivalent specimens and contribute the largest number of motifs to art and literature.

A typical example of such a twofold-equivalent symbol is the tortoise. This animal is associated with the aquatic element not only externally, having a bulb-shaped carapace closely resembling the equally bulb-shaped

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mūla, but its nature, too, is closely connected with the waters on account of its living in this element, one of its names being 'Lord of the Water' *(apāṃ patiḥ,* Vāj. Saṃh. XIII, 3). This twofold association with the aquatic element undoubtedly explains the fact that amongst the animals the tortoise is the padmamūla-symbol *par excellence.*

Another example is the lion's head. Its particular capacity to serve as a brahmamūla-symbol is due both to the fiery nature which the lion shares with this mūla and to the resemblance between the head and the mūla, a point we discussed before (p. 43).

Integration

The fact that twofold equivalence renders an object or being preferable as an instrument for symbolization had the important consequence that in cases where only one criterium occurs a strong tendency appears to make up for the missing quality. If for instance an animal functioning as a padmamūla-symbol is only by its nature associated with the aquatic element, the tendency will be to raise the single to a twofold equivalence, either by making the animal's shape correspond with the round form of the mūla, or by selecting from the existing varieties a specimen with a round, plump figure. On the other hand, should the external form correspond but not the natural qualities, then the deficiency is made up by investing the padmamūla-symbol with certain Soma attributes and the brahmamūla-symbol with Agni attributes. The former attributes are particularly the capacity of answering prayers and bestowing riches, offspring, fertility, longevity, etc. (p. 59). The Agni-attributes are generally more capricious when they appear in certain qualities, habits, acts, disguises, and mythical peculiarities of the fire-god, for instance acting as a glutton, a thief, a seducer of women, a youth, an old man, a charioteer, an archer, a barber, or turning out as a tremendous jumper or dancer, or hiding frequently in the water or in plants, etc. (p. 61).

The foregoing may be summarized as follows: each symbolic form has its adequate contents, and reversely.

To supplement the foregoing and also in order to avoid misunderstanding, I wish to emphasize that in our further examination we shall meet quite a number of inanimate or living beings which at first existed independent of any form of symbolism and played their part in Indian life, but later, on account of their shape or nature corresponding to a certain part of the Tree-organism, came within the appeal of Tree-symbolism, taking up their place there either unchanged or after a

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process of adaptation, making them more capable for their new task than their natural state or qualities would have permitted.

Identification

So far we have dealt with the relation between symbols and their vegetal substrata, but apart from this we shall have to take account of certain relations between the various symbols themselves, governing as it were their intercourse and creating the conditions for their mutual influence, association, and interchanging.

The most important phenomenon we meet in this connection we shall in future call 'identification with a concealed third.' It is an application of the well-known syllogism: if A is equal to C, and B is equal to C, then A equals B; in other words: when two symbols represent the same part of a plant, then they are equivalent and interchangeable.

This rule has been widely applied and in our further enquiry we shall meet many similar cases. One illustration I may give already here.

As the serpent, on account of its thin, round and long shape, is symbolically identical with the lotus-stalk, and the arrow for the same reason resembles this stalk, the conclusion is that arrow equals serpent. This explains why in mythology serpent and arrow are often compared and identified[1] and why they so often change places. In connection with the latter feature we may mention the serpent-arrows in the wayang, Indrajit's serpent-arrow entwining Hanuman's body; the nāga king Aśvasena who in the form of an arrow enters Karṇa's quiver (Mbh. VIII 90, 12-54), and the two great nāgas, dwellers in a mountain-lake, who suddenly change into Śiva's bow and arrow in order to put Arjuna in possession of the Pāśupata-weapons promised by the god (Mbh. VII 81, 10).

It goes without saying that in all these cases the lotus-stalk as 'the concealed third' effected the metamorphosis of arrow into serpent, and reversely.

In the cases we are dealing with here not always a complete substitution of one symbol by another takes place. Often a single part acquires a new owner, passes from the one symbol to the other in order to find in its new surroundings a task similar to the previous one. If in this case the bearers of the symbols are living beings, then peculiar forms of a hybrid nature often appear, of which *e.g.* the Hindu-Javanese makara shows widely differing varieties.

In this connection I also mention cases in which the relation between

[1] Hopkins, *Epic Myth.*, p. 27: "Arrows likened to flying snakes"; G. J. Held, *The Mahābhārata*, p. 273: "The comparison of the arrow and the snake is very common."

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essentially similar symbols finds expression in a mutual attraction that does not result in a complete or partial substitution. This is particularly shown in the tendency found in greater or lesser degree in each symbol to amplify and round itself off by attracting allied symbols and by surrounding and decorating itself with them. This often results in secondary formations acquiring a luxuriant growth to the extent of outgrowing the symbol from which they sprang and hiding it wholly or partly from view.

Shifting of emphasis and selection

Besides the above-mentioned source of variations of the Tree-motif, there has been of old another source used as liberally with the object of adding new modes of expression to the idiom of symbolism. It is based on the possibility of altering in an unlimited number of ways the relation between the various components of the Basic Form. This does not imply the introduction of superfluous elements foreign to the Basic Form or an interchange of the component parts of this Form, for the rules governing the play of symbolism do not permit any such infringement. What is meant is the ever-present freedom of emphasizing various parts of the Form, now the stem, now the top, or again the root and side-branches, and so, in reproducing, verbally or pictorially, the part in question in its symbolic aspect, to emphasize and enlarge it, whereas the remaining parts are proportionally reduced or dwarfed, often even quite obliterated. So we often find a motif consisting *e.g.* of only a mūla with side-branches, or of the substituted symbols, whereas the other parts of the plant are only rudimentarily developed or have disappeared altogether.

Schematizing

I should also mention here briefly the 'schematized' symbolical forms, although strictly speaking they do not belong to the above group of variations. Anyway, Indian decorative art used them not less frequently than the more elaborate forms. They are composed on the same lines as the latter and contain the same elements, be it in a strongly simplified and schematized form, which usually preserves only the main characteristics of the basic symbolic figures. The result is often obscurity and ambiguity and it is no wonder that the analysis of these forms is materially hampered. But it will appear later that schematizing, if it took place at an early date, often had a 'petrifying' effect so far as it preserved very ancient and otherwise unknown variations of the Basic Form. The examination of these variations, unfortunately, is beyond the scope of the present work except

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for the isolated cases where the matter under discussion includes a schematized form.

Jungle formation

In conclusion, I draw the attention to a phenomenon which is comparable to jungle-formation in tropical nature and in a certain sense is even identical with it, because the symbols and motifs involved can belie their vegetal nature and origin no more than the epiphytic tree after which they are modeled. The phenomenon appears when a number of the tendencies in symbolization referred to above operate simultaneously occasioning intricate complexes in which identifications, substitutions, associations, hybridizations and such like run wild unrestrictedly, entwining and enveloping each other till finally they strangle and crush each other to death.

We shall not attempt to disentangle these Gordian knots — produced so prolifically in South-Indian art — but rather give our attention to the so much more simple and transparent aspects we find *e.g.* in Hindu-Javanese art.

The meaning of 'development'

The fact that in the foregoing we often used the word 'development' for want of a more accurate term and that we shall have to continue this practice whenever the relation between various symbolic forms is under discussion, makes it necessary to point out that our use of the term 'development' differs from the current meaning which applies to a series of forms of one and the same motif that follow each other in a chronological order and pass into each other genetically. Unlike this method of comparison we are placing side by side, in a shorter or longer line, a number of forms which at various times and in various surroundings developed (in the meaning of the word we have in view here) from the same Basic Form independently; a line which links various stages of evolution together and

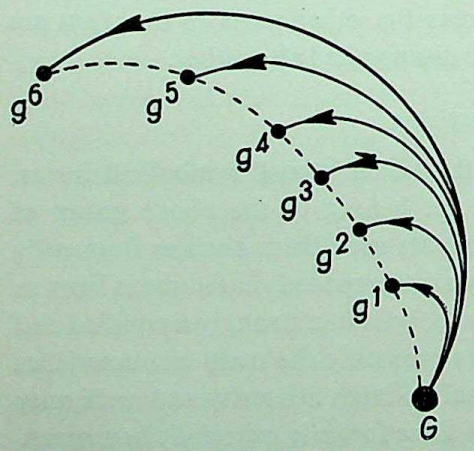

Fig. 12

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may serve as a means of comparing the form furthest departed from the Basic Form with others not so much developed, and so interpreting them.

Fig. 12 illustrates this further. In the basic form G all the various potential appearances of a certain motif are present, they are there as it were in an embryonic form, each waiting its turn to be born. So from G, at places and times far distant, there evolve for instance the Central Javanese form g^1, the Gupta form g^2, the modern Balinese form g^3, the Khmer form g^4, etc., which forms linked by an imaginary line represent the continuous development g^1-g^2-g^3-g^4, but two by two have no link except for the lines leading to and from G.

From this it follows that for drawing up the 'development'-line g^1-g^6 it is immaterial from what periods or schools of art we acquire our examples, and furthermore that clinging to a chronological sequence of the forms — useful though it may be for a comparative and historical study of styles — would entail the danger of looking for a genetic relation between succeeding appearances of a motif which in reality does not exist.

The method to be adopted

The method of our examination will be to study one by one the various parts of the Basic Form, to discuss successively their various symbolic forms and to wind up by combining the results so obtained so as to acquire a general view of the whole.

The serious drawbacks to this method are inherent in the nature of Tree-symbolism itself. Whereas its main characteristic is its indivisibility on account of all constituent parts belonging to one living organism, we are to proceed anatomically, that is to say, we shall have to draw a number of dividing lines, in order to study the isolated components of the Basic Form one after the other and individually, be it in their relation to their surroundings. The result will be a series of disconnected images of an organism that in all its connecting parts ought to be perceived and understood at one and the same glance.

To the reader the main inconvenience of this method lies in the necessity of occasionally anticipating on future subjects of discussion and referring back to matters already dealt with, an inconvenience that cannot be altogether evaded, although I hope to be able to reduce it to the smallest possible and most unavoidable minimum.

Finally, I should point out that our subsequent discussion on various forms of ornamentation, symbols and decorative motifs will not include theorizing on the history of art and religion nor an enquiry into their application and dispersion, or the acquisition of new data.

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Our object is limited to finding the relations between the Tree-organism and the symbolical representations embodied and expressed in the products of art. Completeness will not be our aim. On the contrary, if we do not wish to be led astray in the labyrinth of Indian symbolism, as so many have been before us, we shall be well advised to circle tentatively and cautiously round ever-alternating starting-points leaving vast adjoining fields unexplored. So the cases discussed will be in the nature of a series of examples serving both as an illustration and as a confirmation of the hypothesis with which we started this discussion.

B. SYMBOLS OF THE PADMAMŪLA

Guided by the principles formulated above we shall have to look for symbols of the mūla mainly amongst the objects and living beings that externally resemble the mūla, that is to say, amongst those which generally are rotund, smooth, hairless, inarticulate and unadorned, the term 'round' also comprising the variations of the root-form referred to before, *viz.* those in the shape of a jewel, bulb, onion, pear, etc.

According to their internal properties, the mūla-symbols may be divided in those with Agni and those with Soma properties, a third group consisting of twofold-equivalent symbols. On p. 100 the rules for this distinction were set out.

Symbols of the scroll-posts on the Barabuḍur

First of all we shall discuss the independent group of figures at the base of the posts on the Barabuḍur we met already at the beginning of our examination (Pl. 1, 23-26). It includes padmamūla, brahmamūla and twofold-equivalent symbols. After that we shall for the time being deal only with the class of padmamūla-symbols.

Following for our examination Van Erp's detailed and accurate description with the illustrations belonging to it,[2] we find at the base of 76 out of 400 panels the padmamūla we met before pictured in its vegetal form (p. 41). On all the remaining panels the mūla has been replaced by a symbolic figure, *viz.* by an animal, a human figure, or some emblem. The animal figures, 202 in number with 20 variations, far outnumber the others. Next are 60 human or mythical figures in 8 variations, and finally 25 emblems in 4 variations.

These figures show that the diversity of the motifs, though considerable,

[2] *Barabuḍur*, II, pp. 140, 193, 210, 339 ff., Pl. 163-178.

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is not unlimited. Some of them are repeated a great number of times, *e.g.* the tortoise 47, the lion 37, and the fish 21 times; of the mythical figures the makara 44, and of the emblems the vase 17 times. Other representations, on the other hand, are much more uncommon, the monkey appearing 9, the crab 4, the kinnara 5 and the conch 6 times, whereas the cow, the parrot, the yaksha and the garuḍa appear only once.

This distribution shows that the sculptor engaged in decorating the 400 posts was not free to choose his motifs but by tradition was restricted to a limited stock of representations. He used this stock to advantage by distributing it over the total number of posts in proportion to the importance, from the symbolic point of view, of each motif.

On looking closer at the animal figures we are not surprised to see the tortoise heading the list with 47 pictures (Pl. 25*a*). We remarked before (p. 100) that the tortoise, both for its outer appearance and for its inner nature, is closely related to the padmamūla, for the former on account of the spherical form of its carapace, for the latter by its nature being that of the waters. This twofold equivalence made the tortoise a prominent representative of the mūla, and so it is small wonder that the animal not only occupies first place amongst the mūla symbols of the Barabuḍur but also, in the cosmogonic myth of the churning of the ocean, has been assigned the part of supporting the top of the cosmic mountain.

The fish, too, has often been represented on the Barabuḍur (Pl. 25*b, c*) though not so frequently as the tortoise. This inferior rank, no doubt, is due to the fact that the fish, although pre-eminently an aquatic animal, through its oblong shape shows a marked contrast with the mūla's spherical outline, a disparity which must materially have hampered its capacity for serving as a mūla symbol. In view of this it is quite remarkable that instead of the oblong fish we frequently find on the Barabuḍur reliefs the picture of a very bulging, sometimes even spherical, specimen (Pl. 25*c*). It seems plausible that these are cases of 'integration' of the symbol (p. 101), in other words, that the deficiency in the resemblance to the mūla was made up by endowing the fish with a spherical outline in order to enhance the simple equivalence of the symbol to a twofold one.

Curious examples of this sort of integration may also be found amongst the pictures of the goose which as an aquatic animal certainly deserves a place amongst the padmamūla-symbols and, indeed, appears seven times on the Barabuḍur-reliefs (Pl. 25*d*). Of these pictures a few show the bird full-face and provided with a spherical belly, the sculptor's intention evidently having been to make up for nature's deficiency by establishing artificially the eagerly sought close resemblance between symbol and mūla.

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To the group of animals with twofold equivalence belongs also the sea-crab appearing on the Barabuḍur reliefs four times in spite of its humble looks (Pl. 26*a*). Most likely this honour is due not only to its quality of aquatic animal but no less to the fact that nature endowed it with a double set of legs, four on either side of the round body, and moreover with a pair of strong pincers. This shape unmistakably resembles the padmamūla which is often pictured with thin offshoots on either side of the round body and a pair of vigorous side branches emerging from the same body. That the sea-crab as a padmamūla-symbol has been very longlived is graphically shown in the Balinese relief of recent make, a picture of which is given in fig. 13 showing even more distinctly than on the Barabuḍur relief the animal serving as a substitute of the mūla.

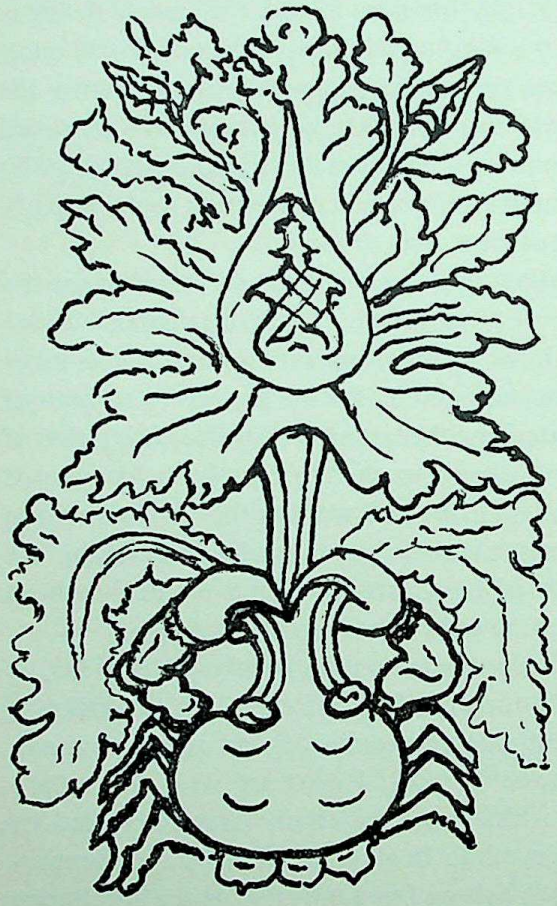

Fig. 13

Instructive examples of twofold equivalence may also be found amongst the tatributes and emblems such as the pitcher, the jewel and the conch. As we shall reserve these objects for future discussion, we pass on to the representations in which outward resemblance has disappeared and similarity of nature is essential.

The most numerous are the representations which in one way or another are connected with the aquatic element. Amongst animals these are, apart from the tortoise, the fish, the goose, and the crab, the otter, the nāga or serpent (Pl. 26*b*), the elephant, the shrimp (Jav. mengkara = makara), and the cow.

With regard to the makara it may not be quite correct to leave the

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question of shape out of account altogether — the makara-like type of mūla referred to on p. 43 is a case in point — but in the case of the cow a resemblance to the lotus-root is out of the question. This very likely explains why this animal has been pictured only once, although as a producer of *payas*, pre-eminently a rasa liquid, it would have deserved a privileged place amongst mūla-symbols. However, in this case, unlike in the case of the fish and the goose, it was quite impossible to produce a resemblance in the shape and this no doubt prevented the cow from becoming a true mūla-symbol.

Animals which by their fiery nature are related to Agni and therefore are apt to serve as a brahmamūla-symbol are the lion, the kāla-head and the garuḍa (represented respectively 37, 2 and 1 times) which we shall discuss later, and also the dog and the jackal (represented resp. 16 and 5 times), both omnivorous *(sarvabhuj)* and as such essentially equal to the fiery element (cf. p. 61).

Apart from a number of undefinable birds and quadrupeds, respectively 15 and 5, there remain: deer (10), monkey (9), hare (7), tiger or cat (6), boar (2), parrot (1), and tapir? (1), and, of mythical figures: vidyādhara (5), kinnara (5), dwarf (2), and yaksha (1).

It would take us too far afield if we explored the literature for data regarding the Agni or Soma nature of each of these animals. No doubt, the greater part possessed twofold-equivalent qualities, and so could serve both as padmamūla and as brahmamūla symbol.

The animal figures appearing at the foot of the scroll-posts on the Barabuḍur await further expert examination to supplement A. Steinmann's study of animal figures on the bas-reliefs of this sanctuary (*TBG*, LXXIV, 1934, p. 101-123). I may only point out that the animal with long ears and paws which appears 7 times and is hypothetically called a hare by Van Erp (*Barabuḍur*, II, p. 143) probably represents the legendary aśvin animal referred to by Stutterheim, "Oost-Java en de Hemelberg", Djåwå, VI, 1943, p. 889 sq.; vide also under *gunungan* hereafter. On the tapir cf. Van Erp, *op. cit.*, p. 142. The same author remarks: "It is not clear what the meaning is of the small nude figure no. 164 f (our Pl. 26*d*). Probably we have here the picture of a cupid well known in Indian art." I think it more likely that the picture represents a dwarf and finds its explanation in the doctrine of the Upanishads which contrasts the smallness of the Brahman as Ātman with the greatness of the Brahman as Soul of the Universe.[3]

[3] Corroborative loci in L. Scherman, *Philosophische Hymnen aus der Rig- und Atharvavedasanhitā*, p. 17 f.

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The bowl of plenty

Whereas our starting-point so far has been a more or less independent group of symbolic representations all appearing on the same building, our aim having been to point out their relation to the two types of mūla, in the following review a reversed procedure will be preferable, on the understanding that after starting from a certain mūla-form we endeavour to find the corresponding symbolic representation. The brahmamūla for the present will be left out of consideration, as we wish to concentrate on aspects of the padmamūla. For a vast group of these symbols our study is considerably facilitated on account of the simplicity of the basic part of the Tree-motif involved, which merely includes the padmamūla itself with the vegetation sprouting from its top or base.

The following motif is a case in point.

We start from the padmamūla shaped like a sphere (cf. Pl. 16*b*) from whose top sprouts a voluminous bundle of stalks bearing leaves, flowers and buds. Now all we need to do is to symmetrize this vegetation in relation to the axis and to imagine the sphere to be changed into a rotund vessel, *kumbha, kalaśa* or *ghaṭa,* after which we have before us the well-known motif of the vase or bowl filled with flowers, the so-called *pūrṇa-kalaśa* or *pūrṇaghaṭa,* also called *amṛitaghaṭa* or *bhadraghaṭa* (Pl. 27*a-d;* 28*a-c*).[4]

Each particular basic form corresponds with a particular form of the decorative motif. If for instance the mūla appears as a round body from whose top one or more shoots grow straight upward, then the counterpart is a form of the pūrṇakalaśa-motif showing a lotus-bouquet or spiral scroll rising high from the bowl's mouth. This form was used mainly to fill upright posts, panels, etc. (Pl. 27*b*, *d*). If, on the other hand, the top-vegetation in question consists of two stalks, growing sideways (the lateral stalks of the Basic Form) then it develops into a bowl with scrolls spiraling on either side, a motif which has mainly been applied on parts stretching horizontally (Pl. 29*a*).

The first-mentioned kumbha with upward-growing vegetation we find again in iconography though not as a decorative motif but having its own place on the pedestal of a statue beside the feet of the deity. In the pictures of these pedestal-kumbhas, all the successive stages of evolution, at least in Hindu-Javanese art, are represented, beginning with a spherical root of a purely vegetal nature (fig. 14*a*), passing on to a small pot (appearing on the well-known Tṛiṇavindu image of Singosari, (fig. 14*b*), and

[4] On the difference between *kuṇḍi(kā)* or *kamaṇḍalu* and *kumbha, kalaśa* or *ghaṭa,* see Coomaraswamy, *Artibus Asiae,* 1928-29, pp. 122 f.

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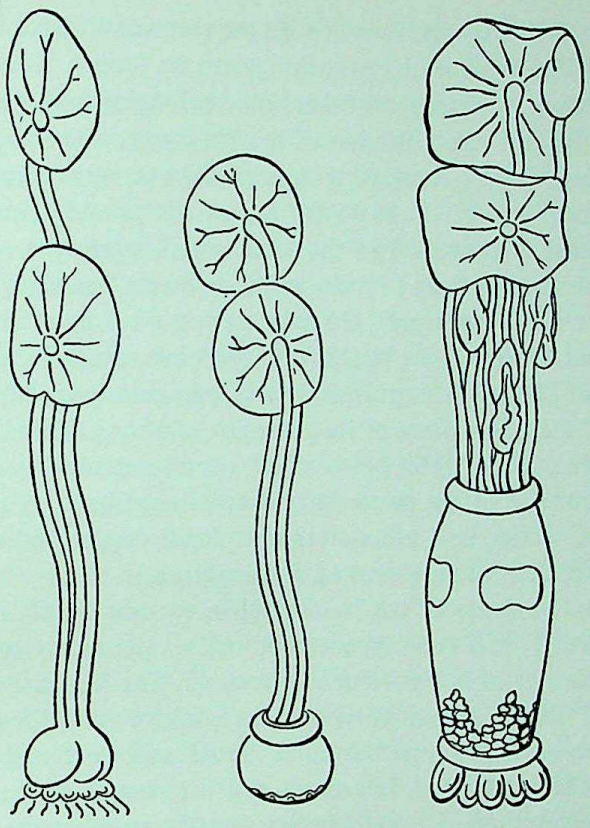

a *b* *c*

Fig. 14

ending in the slender, beautifully fashioned ornamental vase from the Majapahit period (fig. 14*c*).

We shall not dwell on the many variations and modifications in the elaboration and application of the vase-motif in India, Further India, the Archipelago and elsewhere. We should not forget, however, that the important place the pūrṇakalaśa occupied in East-Asiatic art and the preference given to it for all sorts of decorative purposes, cannot be fully understood so long as it is considered to be no more than an elegant and artistic decorative motif, and to present nothing more significant than a picture of a bowl filled with water and flowers. We shall only do justice to this motif and it will only regain its original symbolic meaning if we look upon it as the substitute *par excellence* of the chief organ of the lotus, the padmamūla.

The kumbha's remarkable suitability to serve as a symbol of this mūla

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is no doubt due to its equivalence with the padmamūla both in form and in contents. The latter is no less striking than the former. The contents of the kumbha are water or some other liquid belonging to the Soma-group, the active part of which consists of the life-giving, regenerating, health, opulence and fertility bestowing rasa, the same rasa which, strongly concentrated, is to be found in the sap of plants and as amṛita in its purest essence is contained in the lotus' main organ: the padmamūla. This resemblance both as to form and to contents has made the pūrṇa-kalaśa the truest counterpart, the most perfect symbol, of the lotus-root and invested it with all the beneficial powers inherent in Hiraṇyagarbha, the germ of all life. The pūrṇakalaśa is particularly credited with the power to fulfill the desires of its possessor and to produce all kinds of treasures. It is specially this power that is prominent not only in narrative literature but also in art, particularly in pictures of bowls of plenty filled with jewels, pearls, and other treasures placed on the pedestals of the images of certain gods and around wishing-trees.

Form and contents of the bowl-emblem are not merely inseparable, they also define and pre-suppose each other. Alternately one calls the other into being, or is born out of the other. The fact that a vessel has a spherical shape suffices to change its contents into life-giving rasa and, reversely, rasa-properties in a liquid will confer the spherical shape on the container.[5] Literature and art abound with examples of these representations. I may mention that the vessel made by the god Tvashṭar containing the celestial nectar is always spherical in shape[6]; further that the magic water *(vajrodaka)* used by the great Buddhist saint mpu Bharāḍa to divide Java in two halves is poured out through a kumbha[7]; that the Balinese *toya tirta* (holy water) is always prepared in a spherical earthen or brass bowl and used in acts of worship, and finally that the sperm, pre-eminently a rasa-liquid, which flowed from Mitra and Varuṇa when they beheld the beautiful celestial nymph Urvaśī was caught in a kumbha from which, as from a mother's womb (because kumbha = padmamūla = Hiraṇya-*garbha*), the mighty seer Agastya was born.

We shall now discuss a few interesting variations of the pūrṇakalaśa-motif.

The first one is distinct from the forms related above in that not only

[5] For an amusing story of a *bhadraghaṭa* (inexhaustible pitcher) see *Kathāsaritsāgara*, 57, 25 ff.; further Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, II, pp. 37 ff.; É. Lamotte, *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, II, 1949, p. 777; J. L. Moens, *TBG*, 83 (1949), pp. 94 ff.

[6] Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, II, p. 40.

[7] N. J. Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis*, pp. 273 f.

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the mūla but also the vegetation sprouting from it underwent a symbolic transformation.

Three stages of evolution may be traced here. The first appears when the lotus has the form of a tree (p. 82) and the stem emerging from the mūla-top accordingly assumes the form of a tree-stem. As one of the symbolic manifestations of the tree-stem is a post or a column — we have pointed this out before and it will occupy us again later on — the replacement of the mūla by the kumbha and of the tree by a column will produce the picture of a kumbha from whose neck a column rises (Pl. 28*b*, *c*; 30 *c*, *d*).

The second evolution shows the column and the kumbha growing together into a column with a bulging base (Pl. 30*b*), the latter being called in the Śilpaśāstras *kumbha*.[8]

The third evolution produces a mūla from which rises a vegetation that partly maintains its original form, whereas the centre-stem is changed into a pillar. The result is the curious picture of a bowl filled with a lotus-bouquet from whose centre the shaft of a pillar rises straight upwards (Pl. 30*a*).

Of another interesting variation of the bowl-motif I know only one example, to be found on a relief of the Haṃsa temple at Prambanan (Pl. 29*b*). It can be explained if we start from a vegetal basic form showing the side stalks emerging not from the top but from the base of the padmamūla, the top vegetation being limited to a single sprout (Pl. 14*a*). If once more we change the mūla into a bowl we obtain a water vessel with lotus scrolls emerging not from the mouth, as is usual, but from the bottom of the bowl.

Finally, I direct the reader's attention to the Balinese *kĕṇḍi* in Pl. 27*c*. This modern utensil, for all its simplicity, appears to possess all the chief elements of the Tree-motif: the padmamūla is represented by the belly of the pitcher, the stem-part by the neck, the brahmamūla by the projecting round thickening at the top of the neck, whilst the celestial tree has its counterpart in the small tree made from wire and artificial flowers emerging from the top of the object.

Pot-bellied persons

Kumbha-symbolism was considerably expanded through the fact that there exists a natural and striking resemblance in form between the kumbha's belly and the pot-bellied abdomen of a human body. This resemblance led in Indian symbolism to an identification of both objects which not only is evidenced by expressions like *kumbhodara, kuṇḍodara,*

[8] P. K. Acharya, *A Dictionary of Hindu Architecture*, 1927, p. 142 f.

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indicating 'pot-bellied' persons, but also resulted in a transfer of the auspicious properties of the rasa-filled kumbha to the pot-bellied type of persons (Pl. 31). Consequently these beings, mostly gods and demi-gods, are generally characterized by the possession of one or more rasa-properties, particularly the power to bestow prosperity, fertility, opulence, and offspring.

The kumbha being associated both with the pitcher and with the human belly, it is understandable that from these two representations various intermediate and hybrid forms developed, a remarkable example of which is the image of a goddess from Jagatsukh, Kulū, shown on Pl. 31*d*. The curious thing about this stout figure is her holding in her hands a huge pitcher in such a manner that the pitcher's belly seems to be her own. Here the object has not yet been incorporated in the human body but it occupies a place revealing clearly the close relation between the kumbha and belly.

Besides hybrid forms of this kind there is the group of gods and other beings with whom the belly took the form of a pitcher (Pl. 31*a-c*); in other words, whose striking characteristic is the prominent belly combined with the possession of one or more rasa-properties. As a matter of course we think here in the first place of the corpulent god of riches Kuvera, and of the pot-bellied Gaṇeśa whose body is said "to be like a kumbha containing prosperity in every enterprise".[9]

It would take us too far afield if we made these and other pot-bellied deities the subject of further examination from this angle,[10] the more so as their connection with the padmamūla-symbols which we are to discuss here is not always obvious. An exception presents itself in the case of a certain group of mythological beings whose association with the padmamūla, and indirectly also with the kumbha, is very prominent. The gaṇas, vighnas, yakshas and other beings belonging to this group are usually pictured with a dwarfish figure and more or less deformed (Pl. 32*a-c*). Moreover they are given a large head, short limbs, and a heavy, prominent belly; in short, they show the rotund, short and compact figure which makes them eminently suited to serve as a symbolic substitute of the padmamūla. It is not at all strange then, to find in Indian art, particularly in ancient Buddhist art, many representations having for the starting-

[9] *Kathāsarits*. 22, 162: *Namaḥ sarvārthasaṃsiddhinidhikumbhopamātmane*. Cf. *ibid.*, 22, 55 mentioning a Gaṇeśa image that fulfils all wishes.

[10] On these potbellied types see L. Adam, *Buddhastatuen*, 1925, pp. 71, 105, Pl. 18, 48; L. Scherman, "Dickbauch-Typen in der ind.-ost-asiatischen Götterwelt", *Jahrb. d. Asiatischen Kunst*, 1924.

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point of ascending or horizontal lotus-scrolls a pot-bellied yaksha-figure holding the stem of the plant in its hand or, more frequently, having the stem emerge from the mouth or the navel (Pl. 32*b*, *c*).

The motif of the yaksha appearing as a padmamūla has been elaborated in a unique and curious relief-scene on the chaṇḍi Lumbung (Central Java) (Pl. 32*a*). As the central figure of the well-known double spiral-ornament we find here a pot-bellied little man, squatting, with arms outstretched, curling hair, dilated eyes and big round ear-ornaments, the latter features indicating that we are dealing with a yaksha-figure. We further notice broad bundles of sprays emerging from the armpits and sides and proceeding as spirals in both directions in the usual manner. From this last feature it becomes evident that the yaksha body has taken here the place and the role of the lotus-root and as a mūla-symbol performs the same task as elsewhere is assigned to the kumbha.

The conch

In the above we have dealt with a unique representation — at least as far as Java is concerned — whose unnaturalness no doubt prevented its imitation and propagation on a wide scale. Quite a different case is that of the śaṅkha(conch)-motif which is hardly less popular than the pūrṇa-kalaśa. In order to trace its origin we shall have to go back to a pear-shaped mūla consisting of two parts, whose hollow sides are placed against each other (Pl. 16*d*). Pl. 33*a* shows how from this the conch-symbol placed on the convex part developed. As far as can be ascertained the conch in this position never has a pair of wings. These come into the picture when the object is placed on the pointed end and two leaves sprouting from the padmamūla's top and clearly recognizable in Pl. 33*b* are changed into wings (Pl. 33*c*).

The śaṅkha both on account of its form and of its nature is closely connected with the padmamūla and thereby is on a par with the kumbha-symbol. In this connexion I need only mention that the śaṅkha or conch-trumpet plays an important part as a wind-instrument,[11] not only in Indian music but also in war and on religious occasions, for the purpose of drawing the attention of the gods or imitating the voice of the supreme god and thereby frightening the demons.[12] So the conch as a producer of sound is a manifestation of Vāch and as such identical with the aquatic

[11] Repeatedly mentioned in ancient Javanese texts and also often pictured on East and Central Javanese reliefs, see J. Kunst, *Hind.-Jav. muziekinstrumenten*, 1927, Index s.v. śangka.

[12] J. L. Moens, "Hindoe-Jav. portretbeelden" (H.-J. portrait-images), *TBG*, 58, p. 504.

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element (p. 53). On the other hand, it was also used as a water vessel[13] and in this capacity clearly shows its identity with the aquatic element and thereby with the padmamūla.

In conclusion, I wish to mention the power of the śaṅkha, shared with many padmamūla-symbols, to bestow opulence and to grant wishes. We find it for instance as an attribute of the god Kuvera, giver of riches and grantor of wishes.

The jewel

When we dealt with the kāla-motif and the antefix the jewel was frequently mentioned (p. 42) and it was then pointed out how readily the form of this object passes into that of the mūla and inversely which makes it occasionally hard to decide which of the two objects the artist intended to depict (Pl. 14*a, b*).

This close relation between mūla and ratna here, too, goes together with a no less close resemblance in their Soma-qualities which are particularly expressed in the power to bestow riches and grant wishes, sometimes also to prolong and to stimulate life. So the Bhūridatta-jātaka (no. 453) tells of a nāga-ruler presenting a brahman guest with divine garments and various valuables including a wishing-jewel. Another nāga-ruler, the chief character in the Maṇikaṇṭha-jātaka (no. 253), possesses a precious jewel which has the power to supply an abundance of wholesome food. The story of the nāga-princess Ulūpī (Mbh. XIV, 79, 81) also knows of a magic jewel. In this case it is a jewel which being touched by Arjuna raised him from the dead, a power just as efficient as that of the amṛita itself. Many more examples of this kind could be cited, as Indian mythology and folklore abound with them.

Of all that could still be mentioned about the jewel I may cite one more striking example of the significant way it has been employed in iconography.

The bronze group of Kertek (Wonosobo, Central Java,) Pl. 34[14] represents the divine couple Śiva and Pārvatī sitting on lotus-cushions placed on a high-backed throne whilst between them, on a much smaller cushion, a jewel crowned by a bundle of flames is to be seen.

Why does this object occupy such a prominent place on the throne and what is its meaning there?

In answer to this question Moens drew a parallel between the Kertek-

[13] J. Brandes, *NBG*, 1899, p. 116; 1900, p. 119, 142, 160; Joachim, *TBG*, 49 (1907), 188 ff.
[14] For a detailed description and discussion of this piece see J. L. Moens, "Een Jav.-Buddh. Guru-beeld", *OV*, 1921, p. 186 ff.

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bronze and a number of other images having a male and a female deity for their chief figures and a son occupying a place between them. So in the Somaskandamūrti of Śiva, this god and his Śakti are seated side by side and the nude child Skanda stands between them. On a picture at Ajaṇṭā a similar group is formed by the parents of the bodhisattva, Śuddhodana and Māyā, the juvenile prince Siddhārtha being the third person. So the jewel of the Kertek-bronze may be regarded to be related to Śiva and Pārvatī in the same way as the son to his parents in the two other groups.

This provides us with an explanation of the piece. Śiva and Pārvatī represent here the two mighty powers of nature at the beginning of creation[15] which, no matter what their various appearances are or the names they are called by, are ever essentially the same. They personate the male and the female principle in nature, Prajāpati and the primeval waters, mind and matter. Just as according to the ancient Vedic myth the golden germ Hiraṇyagarbha was born by creative breath entering matter, so according to the bronze-group the *maithuna* of the highest god and his Śakti gave birth to the symbolic equivalent of the germ, the flaming jewel-emblem. It stands between them as the fruit of their union, just as in the groups mentioned above the son Skanda and the son Siddhārtha occupy the central places between their parents.

There is one remarkable detail in the ornament of the Kertek-bronze which may be regarded as a valuable support of the above explanation. It is to be found in the centre of the back of the throne behind the spot where the jewel is placed. Here the Tree-motif appears cut out in the bronze, in a greatly condensed form but nonetheless distinct. The jewel itself serves as padmamūla and on it rises the stem-element of the Tree represented by a detached column (stambha) on whose top rests the brahmamūla in the shape of a lotus (p. 42). A more meaningful application of the Tree-motif than we find in this very spot and in this function we could hardly have wished for.

The Śrī character

It is well known that on Java the Sanskrit word *śrī* meaning 'prosperity', 'opulence', 'abundance', and represented by an old-Javanese character, has been in use as a propitious sign, appearing as such on a number of personal ornaments (particularly finger-rings), bronze implements,

[15] Cf. Avalon, *Mahānirvāṇatantra*, p. XXVI: "The dual principles of Śiva and Śakti, which are in such dual form the product of the polarity manifested in Paramaśaktimaya pervade the whole universe..."

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sacrificial utensils, etc. We shall not dwell on this usage but rather on the fact that the form of the śrī-character in the course of time underwent certain changes which we are not be able to explain unless we associate them with the close relation which, according to Hindu-Javanese view, existed between this character and the main organ of the lotus.

In order to demonstrate this we mention in the first place the curious fact that the application of the śrī-syllable as a propitious sign remained restricted to the Hindu-Javanese area and has not been traced in India or elsewhere outside Java. This indicates that the ancient Javanese character had a peculiarity of its own that was absent when the syllable śrī was written in devanāgarī or some other Indian script and that gave it its particular capacity to serve as a propitious sign.

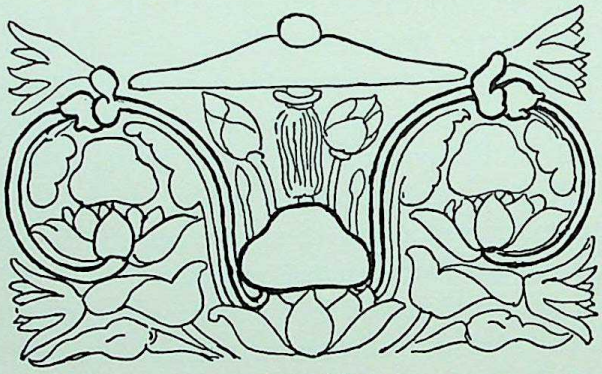

Fig. 15

The nature of this peculiarity is revealed if we compare fig. 15 and Pl. 35*a-b*. It appears then that there is an unmistakable, though *im*perfect, resemblance between the shape of the old-Javanese sign consisting of the arched ś with the curved stroke of the r (*chakra)* underneath it and the circular figure of i *(ulu)* atop (Pl. 35*a, b*), and on the other hand the mūla with its round centre-part and the sprouts springing from the base and the top (fig. 15).

This partial resemblance explains how it was possible for the śrī-character to have been credited on Java with auspicious qualities which it lacks elsewhere, and it also helps us to interpret the various variations in shape mentioned before. We find on the one hand a complete identity of the meaning of the syllable śrī and the meaning of the padmamūla seen as the receptacle of the amṛita liquid, and consequently as the sum of all properties inherent in the idea of śrī, on the other hand an unmistakable, be it imperfect, resemblance in the shape of these two objects. Under these

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circumstances nothing could be more obvious than creating the desired dual identity by applying to the character the principle of integration, i.e. making the necessary corrections so that its outward appearance, too, should resemble the mūla. This was accomplished by placing a second *chakra,* a counterpart of the first, underneath the character (Pl. 35*c-f*). This addition produced a figure with two sprouts issuing from the base, in the manner of the mūla with its two side-stalks issuing from the base (fig. 15). For the same reason the *ulu* was given various leaf-shaped shoots as an imitation of the parts of the plant growing from the mūla-top (fig, 15).

It is evident that according to Javanese belief these alterations considerably enhanced the auspicious power of the character for in its new appearance it had become, both as to shape and to meaning, the perfect counterpart of the mūla. It shared in increased measure the mūla's powers of giving life, granting wishes and bestowing fertility, and could now serve, better than ever, as a talisman or as a propitious sign on ornaments, sacrificial utensils, and suchlike.

The lotus-flower

The type of mūla most important for symbolism is undoubtedly the bipartite lotus-shaped one that we mentioned in passing on p. 42, and reserved for future discussion.

To the question how the Indian came by his curious idea of making the flower of the lotus play the part of the root of the same plant no definite answer can be given. The question has only secondary importance, the main point being our acceptance of the fact that the above idea both in art and literature came to be realized in such a manner that in many cases the flower actually fulfils the place and the function of the padmamūla. We shall demonstrate this presently with the help of pictures, but first we may point to some morphological features of the lotus-flower in so far as they bear on our subject.

The process of the setting of the bud, the enfolding of the corolla and the withering and falling of the leaves of the lotus-flower shows a series of evolutional stages which all can serve as basic forms of symbolic transformations. Theoretically, the number of these forms is equal to the whole series of transformations but in practice, that means when art takes a hand, there are three main forms of development which are symbolically important. These are:

1) the half-open flower, the lower wreath of which has developed already but the top one is still wholly or partially closed and has a spheric or cup shape;

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2) the fully open flower, the upper and lower half of which consist of a wreath of upright, respectively hanging leaves, usually bulging or bell-shaped;

3) the half-withered flower, the lower leaves of which are drooping and closing round a spherical or bell-shaped space, whereas the upper part has retained the aspect mentioned under 2.

These three forms allow of four possible symbolic substitutions in which:

a) the whole of the bipartite flower is replaced by a symbol of a corresponding form;

b) each of the two parts is replaced separately by a symbol, producing a combination of two different symbols;

c) the upper part is replaced, the lower half retaining its floral aspect;

d) the procedure under c is reversed.

In the first place, we shall discuss the cases in which the lotus-flower in its character of padmamūla underwent no symbolic alteration but retained its natural aspect or was stylized in the normal manner into a lotus-cushion.

On Pl. 36*a* we find a relief of the chaṇḍi Meṇḍut (Central Java) showing in the middle of the customary scroll-ornament an open lotus-flower with a bird sitting on it and two side-stems emerging from its base and curving to the right and the left. So on the spot where the root belongs the lotus-flower appears sharing with the root the function of producing vegetation.

Another example of this design is to be found on the pilaster-decoration of the Khmer temple Prah Kô (879 A.D.) on Pl. 36*b*. This decoration is composed of a series of identical motifs placed one atop of the other. In each case the base is the padmamūla lotus, not pictured in its natural form as at Meṇḍut but stylized into a lotus-cushion. From the upper surface of each of these cushions emerge two creepers rising sideways — after the manner of the side-stems of the Basic Form — and in addition a centre-stem rising straight up from the middle of the cushion and supporting on its top the next nearest motif. If in a representation of this kind the constituent parts are also stylized, then the purely ornamental forms shown in Pl. 36*c, d* appear. In Khmer art these forms are lavishly used for decorating doorposts, pilasters, and suchlike.

The padmamūla-lotus plays an important part not only as a decorative motif but also in iconography. This occurs particularly when the flower is part of composite image-groups modelled after the organism of the cosmic lotus-plant whose branches, in the manner of the branches of a candelabrum, are widely spread, each bearing the figure of a god or

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some other object of worship. The basic form of all these representations is usually the same: at the base is the padmamūla, which occasionally is seemingly absent when a waving mass of water inhabitated by nāgas hides it from view (Pl. 37*c*). When it is visible it has a floral appearance and often does not differ from the regular lotus-flower or the equally common lotus-cushion (Pl. 37*a, b,* 38*a*). From this flower-like root, mostly serving as a base for the whole group, rises the main stem. This splits up into a centre-stem and an uneven number of branches, the former topped by a parvan in the shape of a large lotus-cushion bearing the chief god of the *maṇḍala,* the latter by smaller parvan-lotus-cushions on which the lesser gods are seated.

The motif of the branching tree rooted in a lotus-shaped mūla is found again in a number of other objects with widely differing meanings and objectives. I mention the temple-lamps (Pl. 38*a*)[16] which have the stem for post, the branches for arms, the parvans for oil-containers and a bipartite lotus-shaped padmamūla for pedestal. The upper half of this mūla usually has the kumbha-shape, whereas the lower half has retained the vegetal aspect of a corolla.

In this connection I should further mention the relief-pictures of the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī (Mahāprātihārya),[17] which in their main features correspond with the groups discussed above (Pl. 39*a-b*). The magic lotus which according to the well-known legend was created by the nāgas Nanda and Upananda occupies also in these pictures a place in the middle of the base[18] except when the flower hides in a waving mass of water and only the stem of the lotus-tree rising from the waters and flanked by the nāgas is visible.[19] This stem in the usual manner splits in a centre-stem and a number of lateral branches, the former topped by a lotus-flower-shaped parvan bearing a Buddha, the others by smaller parvan-lotus-cushions on which secondary images of Buddhas, created by the Tathāgata's magic powers, are seated.

[16] Cf. Coomaraswamy, *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, 1913, p. 141: "Temple lamps are of infinite variety: the most characteristic are the standing lamps in the form of a branching tree, each branch ending in a little bowl for oil and wick." The best known example of this kind of lamps is the beautiful Hindu-Javanese specimen in the former collection Resink-Wilkens, (pl. 386) for a description of which see W. F. Stutterheim, *Djâwâ,* XIV (1934), p. 184. Here it is rightly pointed out that the central standard has been treated and profiled as a column (cf. p. 113) whilst the two outer branches have been represented by stylized stalks with bracts.

[17] A. Foucher, "The Great Miracle at Çrâvastî", *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art,* 1917, pp. 147 ff.

[18] In Foucher's article (p. 159) this lotus is called erroneously "a ripple of waves rolled into a volute".

[19] Foucher, *loc. cit.*, Pl. XX, XXIII 2, XXIV 2, XXV 2.

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From the foregoing examples it is evident that the lotus-flower acting as a padmamūla plays an important part in the conception of certain representations which have the Cosmic Tree motif at the root. It also revealed this other fact, equally significant, that the lotus in question, although outwardly resembling the ordinary lotus, occupies a different place in the plant's organism and has a totally different function. Whereas the latter forms the top and the termination of the stem, the former is its root and starting-point; and whereas the latter rises high above the water's surface and basks in the sunlight, the former hides in the mud and remains wrapped in everlasting darkness, invisible to the human eye. The result of this contrast has been that the ordinary lotus-flower has ever been a thankful object for poetical descriptions and comparisons, whereas the hidden lotus remained wrapped in mystery. In literature it is rarely mentioned and then only in very obscure and vague allusions. The reticence with regard to the hidden lotus even is such that its existence would have passed unnoticed if not art had drawn the attention to it.

If we now proceed to enquire into the nature and the meaning of the mystic lotus we should concentrate on the fact that according to the products of art we discussed above, the whole creation, represented by a lotus-plant, has its beginning and origin in the primeval lotus which feeds and supports it. Just as the primeval waters are the foundation of all things created and are identified with the *dharma* (Śat. Br. XI, 1, 6, 24: *dharmo vā apas*: the Waters are the Law), so the primeval lotus, the symbol of these waters, is their foundation, their *pratishṭhā*, and at the same time the supporter of the universe, the *dharma* of the universe, for *dharma* means supporter.[20]

This identity of the primeval lotus and Dharma has undoubtedly had great, even — in the most literal meaning of the word — fundamental, importance for the development of the Dharma-notion in the Mahāyānist-Buddhist religious system, on the understanding that the emblem of the primeval lotus, represented as the creator and supporter of the cosmic Tree, became the actual pattern after which the abstract notions of that other great supporter, the Dharma preached by the Buddha, were modelled.

Conversely, these notions, in their mutual relations and their deeper meaning, cannot correctly be understood until they are transferred from

[20] Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice*, p. 160. Cf. Hodgson, *Essays*, p. 72: "*Dharma* is the universal substratum, is that which supports all form and quality in space. The *Bauddha Dharma* is the exact equivalent of the *Brahmanical Matra*. *Matra* is that which measures space; *Dharma* that which supports form and quality in space; both are very just and philosophical ideas relative to what we call matter and substance. The *substans* or supporter of all phenomena ,whatever its nature, is *Dharma*."

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the abstract conceptions in which they were handed down into the positive metaphorical language of lotus-symbolism, the language in which they were originally conceived and which gave them their first shape.

The new field of enquiry that opens up here extends too far in all directions and is too far beyond the scope of our discussions to permit of further investigation. Just one question I may submit. Should not the fact that in the title of one of the most sacred and authoritative writings of Mahāyānism, the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka[21], 'the Lotus of the Good Law', Lotus and Dharma have been identified, be interpreted in this manner that, contrary to current opinion, not the ordinary lotus, growing above the water's surface, is meant, but the primeval lotus hidden in the darkness of the waters; the lotus from whose root sprang the organism of the Cosmic Tree and which at the same time is the bearer, the Dharma, of the universe, identified with this Tree? How else can we explain that it is said of the famous sūtra that its sound *(vāch)*, pervades all space, and that the entire creation is founded on it[22]; that it not merely contains the body of the historical Buddha and the bodies of all past and future Buddhas but also gives birth to these bodies — causes them 'to ripen on it',[23] as it is put in another passage, so that, according to this belief, it is not the preaching Buddha who creates the doctrine but, conversely, there is a pre-existing and ever immutable Dharma, which is the origin of all dharma-preaching Tathāgatas; finally, that all Buddha manifestations are essentially one and consubstantial with the Lotus of the Good Law from which they sprang?

These ideas no doubt lose a great deal of their strange unreality if we visualize them, that means if we transpose them in the system of lotus-symbolism and so invest them with a form perceptible to the eye. The picture then presenting itself we have met before when we discussed the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī: the padmamūla here appears in the shape of a lotus-flower (p. 121) which is the 'bearer', the 'dharma', of the Cosmic Tree springing from it, and which is identical with the Dharma-lotus of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka. It contains the amṛita, the life-producing and life-prolonging liquid that from the padmamūla flows upwards through the stem, penetrates into the branches, the twigs and foliage of the tree, and everywhere on its course produces — causes to

[21] The following remarks are mainly based on the detailed analysis of this text by Paul Mus in "Le Buddha paré", *BEFEO*, XXVIII (1928) pp. 175 ff., pp. 234-243, and "*Barabuḍur*", Introd., pp. 237-271, and Pt. VI, pp. 577-802.

[22] On *vāch* as the *pratishṭhā* of the universe and identified with the primeval waters see supra p. 53.

[23] E. Burnouf, *Le lotus de la bonne foi*, p. 39.

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'ripen' — fruits in the form of Buddha-figures through the mouths of which it finally flows off far and wide; that means that by the teachings of those Buddhas the amṛita of the Good Law spreads throughout the Universe for the benefit of all creation.[24] So it is correctly stated that all Tathāgatas sprang from the same Dharma and also that they are essentially one, for indeed all have their root in and derive their nutricious substances from the Lotus of the Good Law which is the primary origin of all earthly life and the producer and bearer of all forms of existence.

Fourfold padmamūla-symbols

We shall now discuss briefly a number of symbols whose interpretation has a fourfold basic form of the padmamūla for a starting-point. The remarkable thing here is that although to my knowledge no pictures of this mūla exist we must, be it only theoretically, take their existence for granted on account of the quadripartite form of the symbols derived from it. I may submit four examples by way of illustration.

The first one is borrowed from the illustrations of a manuscript of the Mo-so or Na-khi, a people belonging to the Tibeto-Burmans and living in the northwestern part of the Chinese province Yunnan (Pl. 40*a*).[25] The object pictured here having a round centre and four vajras grouped round it crosswise — here cut in half — is called *viśvavajra,* and is known as an attribute of various gods. It also played a more or less important part in tantrist Buddhism as the centre figure of yantras, maṇḍalas, charms, and such like.

Our picture shows two worm- or stalk-like projections rising from the centre, and connected by a string. The meaning of the latter is not clear but the form and the direction of the projections at least indicate that they are symbolic equivalents of the two upward-curved lateral branches of our Basic Form sprouting from the mūla. Considering that with the planary design followed here the four-cornered figure has been revolved

[24] Foucher asserts that representations of 'Buddha trees' of this kind are always meant to represent the legend of the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī but I regard this as very unlikely. I believe these representations to be older than the legend, in other words that the legend only originated when the representations were no longer understood by the living generation and required a reasonable explanation. For remarkable examples of 'Buddha trees' in Chinese and Japanese art see G. Mensching, *Buddh. Symbolik,* 1929, Pl. 32; J. Lartigue, "Le sanctuaire bouddh. du Long-hong-sseu à Kia-Ting", *RAA,* V (1928), Pl. XIII; K. With, *Buddh. Plastik in Japan,* 1919, Pl. 28.

[25] For the religion of these Mo-so or Na-khi belonging to Bon-Shamanism but strongly influenced by Buddhism, and for their extensive literature mostly recorded in pictographic script, see J. F. Rock, "Studies in Na-khi literature", *BEFEO,* XXVII (1927), pp. 1 ff.

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so as to coincide with the vertical plane, we can only interpret the picture in this way that the viśvavajra acting as padmamūla is given the shape of a round centre surrounded by four bulb-like protuberances.

The picture on Pl. 40*b* from the Chinese Picture Section of the Tripiṭaka shows this even more distinctly. We find the padmamūla, pictured in its form of primeval lotus, placed in the centre and surrounded at the four corners by vajras, forming a complete viśvavajra. From the centre of this viśvavajra — which again is thought of as stretching in a horizontal plane — the stem of the Tree rises, pictured as a pillar and topped by the brahmamūla in the shape of a flaming jewel.

A third example of a fourfold padmamūla is to be found in the four bags or pots filled with gold, gems and other valuables which on Central Javanese pictures of wishing-trees are often placed round the stem of the tree (Pl. 40*c*).[26] It is evident that in this case the (invisible) vegetal mūla of the tree has retained its natural form, whereas the enclosing spherical protuberances have been changed into bags or pots. In view of our previous remarks on p. 100 it is clear that this change must have been facilitated by the fact that the objects in question both by their round shape and by their being filled with gold express their identity with the mūla.

A final example shows the same arrangement as we found with the wishing-tree, but this time it has been transposed in the macrocosmos and enlarged accordingly.

If we remember that the lotus-root occupies a similar place in the Tree-organism as the Mahāmeru in the Indian world-conception and that the stem rising from this mūla has the mountain-top or celestial pillar for its counterpart (p. 95), then we may confidently identify the four protuberances grouped crosswise round the Tree-root with the four mountains *(vishkambha)* which in brahmanist cosmography enclose the central main-range at the four corners.[27] Consequently, the gold-filled pots of the wishing-tree correspond with the four mountains surrounding the Meru, and the stem of the former is identical with the mountain-top, or celestial pillar.

[26] Examples of this placing are also known in narrative literature, *i.a.* in the *Kuṇḍakapūra-jātaka* (no. 109) in which the bodhisattva appears as a tree-spirit dwelling in a castor-oil plant. A poor man has nothing to offer but a cake of husk powder and water in a cocoanut shell but this meagre offering is gratefully accepted by the bodhisattva with these words: "You have sacrified to one who is grateful and mindful of kind deeds. Round this tree, neck to neck, are buried pots of treasures..." The story resembles the *Palāsa-jātaka* (no. 370) in which a worshipper of a tree-spirit is rewarded with treasures buried at the foot of the tree.

[27] W. Kirfel, *Kosmographie*, p. 93.

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This interpretation of the vishkambhas will no doubt gain in plausibility when our discussion of the brahmamūla-symbols will reveal the existence of a fourfold form of the root of the celestial tree and of a counterpart in the macrocosmos corresponding with the fourfold form of the padmamūla we have just discussed.

The island-motif

To conclude our discussion of the various symbolical forms of the padmamūla we shall briefly dwell on two of these forms which will place us in surroundings quite different from those we have witnessed so far.

Besides the notion which sees the origin of life as a germ developing beneath the water's surface and sending from the muddy bed its stalks upwards, there has been of old the conception of the padmamūla transferred from the bottom to the surface of the water and there forming an island. The nature and the dimensions of this island may vary considerably. In mythology and in narrative literature it often appears as the continent washed on all sides by the ocean and as such is identical with the earth inhabitated by men, the birthplace of Agni (Śat. Br. VII, 4, 1, 9: Thou (earth) art the back of the waters, the womb (yoni) of Agni). But often, too, the character of an island is maintained, that means the character of a magic island endowed with all the miraculous properties inherent in the padmamūla: it is the place where the amṛita is produced and discovered by the chief character of the story; it is, moreover, the source of all life, opulence and wisdom; it is closely related to gold and serves as a foundation of the mountain of the gods, Mahāmeru, which rises there as an enchantingly beautiful edifice, a temple or royal palace. Finally, it is also the place where the Brahman principle, represented as a god or a brahman, descends in order to manifest itself before the eyes of mortals or to be united with the goddess of the waters or of the earth, from which union Agni, or a symbolic appearance of this god, is born.

One or several of these mythological features form the leading motif in a number of narratives in which the magic island figures. I mention here in the first place the beautiful and mysterious story of Dewaruchi of which, as is well known, various versions are current on Java and which to the present day is still very popular. Furthermore, the Śvetadvīpa-episode (Mhbh. XII, 335-339), and the legend of the birth of the seer Vyāsa on an island in the Ganges (Mhbh. I, 63).

The padmamūla as the capital of the state

It would be beyond the scope of this work if we analyzed these and other

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stories containing the island-motif, nor is there room for a discussion of the various ways in which this motif has found expression in sculptural art. But there is still another aspect of this motif which we may not altogether ignore. I have in mind a group of representations which emphasize the function of the padmamūla as the plant's main organ and its central position amongst the other parts of the plant. It is the point where all organs meet and from which they all draw their nutritious substances, comparable with the human heart in which, as Muṇḍ. Up. II 2, 6 has it, "the arteries are placed like spokes in the nave of the wheel ", the great source of energy from which issue the four main arteries and countless smaller arteries through which the precious elixir of life is sent in every direction.

In terms of macrocosmic conditions this means that the padmamūla is the centre of the Cosmic Tree and as the notions of Cosmic Tree and universe become merged the idea presents itself that there is an identity between the plant's central organ and the centre of the universe, or, in terms of earthly conditions, the capital of the state.

This capital, consequently, stands in the same relation to the state as the padmamūla to the Cosmic Tree. It is not merely the heart and centre of the living organism, the state, but also the place where the supreme god manifests himself in the person of the ruler of the world; where stands the golden Meru as the ruler's palace and from where four main roads run in four directions providing with their many ramifications the channels through which the powers that give life, dispel sickness and bestow fertility and prosperity are directed towards the farthest corners of the earth.[28]

Without further elaborating this analogy I want merely to draw the attention to the many names of Indian cities which contain an element indicating amṛita or gold — *e.g.* Amarāvatī, Amarapura, Ngamerta, Amritsar (from Amṛitasaras), Hiraṇyapura —, the very elements that are characteristic for the padmamūla and for all the symbols that at any time may take its place.

C. SYMBOLS OF THE STALK AND OF THE BRANCH[29]

As we shall rarely meet the above symbols as independent units but all the more frequently in combination with other parts of the plant, it will be

[28] R. Heine-Geldern, "Weltbild und Bauform in Südostasien", *WBKKA*, IV (1930), pp. 28 ff.

[29] To avoid needless repetition of the words 'branch' or 'branches', I shall in this chapter only refer to the stalks (of the terrestrial lotus plant) although the discussion also

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convenient to postpone their discussion until the opportunity offers itself of dealing with them in their natural relation with these other parts. In the meantime a few general remarks may find a place here.

The objects or beings which are usually compared and identified with the stalk and so in their symbolic function may serve as its substitutes have as chief characteristic an elongated body, and further show a round cros-section and a smooth and hairless skin or surface.

The following objects answer one or several of these criteria:

certain parts of the human body such as the arm, the leg, the finger, the toe, the tongue, the bowels, locks of hair, and the penis;

certain animals such as worm, serpent and lizard;

certain parts of animal bodies like the tail, the tusks, the snout, the neck, the body (*e.g.* that of the crocodile and of some fishes);

certain objects such as weapons like bow and arrow, dagger, sword or lance; furthermore, the string, the river or stream of any other liquid, the path, the road, the beam of light, the flash of lightning, the fiery tongue, and the pennant.[30]

With regard to some of these objects we should make the reservation that they owe their aptness to serve as symbol not so much to certain qualities of form as to their surroundings, or to the nature of the object or being of which they are part. The crocodile's body for instance, which in itself has little in common with the lotus-stalk, may none the less function as a stalk symbol — see *e.g.* the volutes of the architraves of the toraṇas at Mathurā — because the animal's head is used as a parvan-symbol and so its body, grown together with the head, may be identified with the stalk, grown together with the parvan.

We pointed out before that the stalk-symbols are mutually equivalent and so can be compared and identified; moreover, that they are wholly or partly interchangeable (identification with a concealed third), this being illustrated by the interchangeableness of nāga and arrow (p. 102). In this

includes the branch, or branches, of the celestial tree. To avoid misunderstanding I may point out that in accordance with the nomenclature used with the Basic Form (vide p. 79, fig. 11) the words 'stalk' and 'branch' do not stand for the main stem of the terrestial plant, resp. the central branch of the celestial tree, but for the vegetation sprouting sideways from the two mūlas.

[30] If instead of the aśvattha the banyan serves as celestial tree, we should make a distinction between the branches and the aerial roots of this tree (called *jaṭa*). The latter are compared and identified with the hair-tresses of ascetics (also called *jaṭa*) and with the tails of monkeys living in the tree. See Emeneau, *The strangling figs*, pp. 563 ff. Cf. Suzanne Karpelès, "Lokeçvaraçatakam ou cent strophes en l'honneur du seigneur du monde", *JA*, 11, t. XIV, p. 455, where mention is made of "vos tresses d'ascète, innombrables lianes du désir *(jaṭakalpavallīcayaḥ)*".

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connection I may also mention that the triangular relation between stalk, nāga and arrow is the same as between stalk, nāga and various stabbing and thrust weapons amongst which the *kris,* the Javanese weapon par excellence, ranks first.

This bilateral relation of the kris to the lotus-stalk and to the nāga is clearly expressed in the shape and the decoration of the blade. As to the shape, just as there are two habits of growing for the lotus-stalk, one rising straight and the other winding upwards, so the kris and the nāga-body have two main shapes. Groneman in this connection has the following interesting information[31]: "The basic form of all krisses is the *nāga,* the mythical serpent. So the straight kris, *ḍapor leres* or *bener,* represents the *sarpa tapa,* the nāga resting wrapped in penitential exercise or mystical thought, but the serpentine form, *ḍapor loq* or *ḍapor parong,* represents the *sarpa lumaku,* the lively and active *nāga.*"

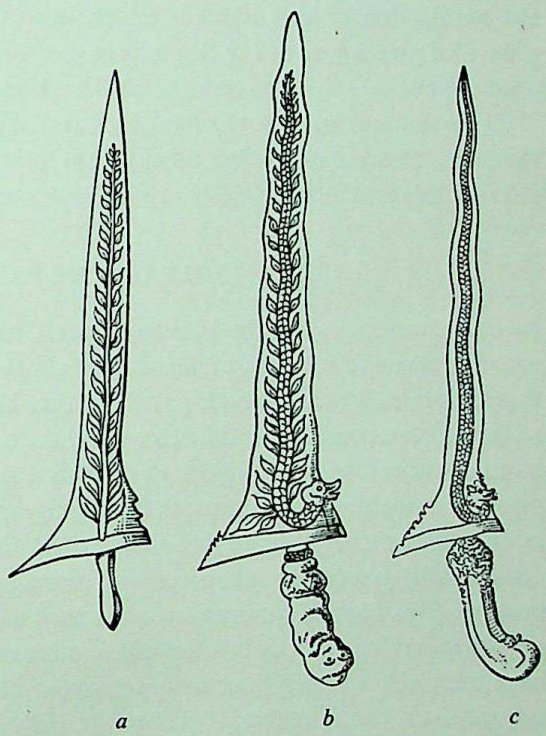

Fig. 16

The above-mentioned bilateral relation has also an important part in the decoration of the kris. In this decoration the most original are the forms that have as ornament a leafy winding stalk or branch (fig. 16*a*). In a later stage of development the stalk is replaced by a nāga from whose body leafy and floral ornaments emerge (fig. 16*b*), whereas in the final

[31] *Intern. Archiv f. Ethnogr.,* XIX (1910), p. 145, quoted by W. H. Rassers, "Inleiding tot de bestudeering van de Javaansche kris" (Introd. to the study of the Javanese kris), *MKAW,* afd. Letterk., NS, 1938, p. 450. The names of krisses and their material *(ḍapor)* which they often share with well-known nāgarājas such as Pasopati, Ardhawalika, Besuki (Vasuki), Nagasena, Naga seluman (*Djâwâ,* XVIII, 1938, p. 264) are also interesting.

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stage the third term that served for the identification of kris and nāga has withdrawn, that is to say, the stalk-element has disappeared from the ornament which now entirely consists of the nāga-body (fig. 16*c*).

On this last form Rassers remarks[32]:" In most of the cases where a kris-blade has been decorated we find a snake as sole and principal figure. The head usually is at the foot, the wide open mouth is turned outward and the body stretched upward towards the point. It is certain that the application of this motif is an ancient custom. In the case of the oldest kris we know of (*i.e.* the kris in the Knaud collection bearing the date 1264 śaka) the blade on either side has been decorated with serpents."

These few remarks on the nāga as a stalk-symbol may suffice for the moment. The many-headed form of the mythological serpent will be referred to again at the close of our discussion of parvan-symbols.

D. SYMBOLS OF THE PARVAN

In our examination of the parvan-symbols we shall have to take into account that the relation of these symbols to each other and to their vegetal basic form slightly differs from that between the mūla and the stalk. The latter are all in the same relation to their substratum and are mutually equivalent — subject to the fact that some of them are in a privileged position and are more frequently applied than others — but in the case of the parvan-symbols these relations appear to have been considerably altered in favour of one representative of this group, the makara. This aquatic monster occupies such a prominent place amongst the other symbols that only a few of the other representatives of the node have been able to hold their own, the major part having been somehow subordinated to the makara-figure (cf. p. 102), *e.g.* by being added as an embellishment or, by yielding one or more parts of the body, or by emerging from the monster's open mouth. On the other hand, it is evident that the parvan-symbols fall under the general rule that a two-fold equivalence is an asset to the symbol function, that means in this case that we shall deal mainly with objects and beings which express their close relation to the parvan both by their nature being associated with the aquatic element, and by their outward resemblance to the parvan.

The antelope

A remarkable variation of the makara-toraṇa, so far not found either in India or on Central Java but abundantly represented in East-Javanese

[32] *Loc. cit.*, p. 450.

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art and also well-known from the Javanese wayang and from Balinese art is presented by the antelope-toraṇa, i.e. the toraṇa-type having the posts and usually also the monster-head *(banaspati)* in their customary place but the two makaras having been substituted by the head or the upper parts of the body of the antelope (Jav. *kidang*, Pl. 41). The same motif, slightly altered, occurs in Further India, *e.g.* in two specimens from the initial period of Cham art (7th till 8th century), but here, unlike the Javanese-Balinese design, the kidang-figures do not replace the makaras but emerge half-way from the monster's mouths.[33]

On a former occasion[34] I have attempted to explain the curious fact that the above type of toraṇa is found in Further India and on Java but is totally absent in Indian art, by assuming the possibility that in prehistoric times, when the ancestors of Chams, Khmers and Javanese still inhabited the Asiatic continent together, cultural interchange took place between these peoples which caused the above motif to be borrowed by one people from the other so that there was no question of it having been adopted, in historic times, from an Indian source.

This theory appears to be less plausible if we take into account that the antelope-figure both by nature and by its form has a marked affinity with the parvan and so, in this respect, is on a par with other, purely Indian, symbols that have the same character. This resemblance between antelope and parvan obviously only relates to the animal's head and front-legs seen from the side which correspond with the gracefully curved profile of the wide open jaws of the parvan, or of its chief substitute, the makara-head. With regard to the resemblance in nature, we note that in brahmanist ritual the black antelope served as a symbol of the dark, rain-laden mass of clouds and that from the antelope-skin the leather-bag was made that holds the Soma liquid.[35] This indicates that the kidang by its nature belongs to the animals with Soma-properties and for that reason was considered to be, like the parvan and the makara, closely related to the aquatic element. The result was that the animal became a parvan-symbol and as such either could function independently as is the case in Eastern Java and on Bali, or was subordinated to the makara, as was apparently usual in Cham art.

Our conclusion, then, is that the motif must have originated in India from the Tree-symbolism developed there and from India must have

[33] F. D. K. Bosch, "Le motif de l'arc-à-biche à Java et au Champa", *BEFEO*, XXXI (1931), pl. CVI.

[34] *Loc. cit.*, p. 490.

[35] H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 399; *Weltanschauung*, pp. 42, 164; Arbman, *Rudra*, p. 36.

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found its way to Further India and to the Archipelago although the original representation so far has not been discovered in the land of its origin.

The yaksha

Our foregoing remarks on the antelope, with necessary changes, also apply to the yaksha. The possession of certain characteristic Soma-properties — to which we shall refer later on — brings this figure in close relation to the aquatic element and the makara, and causes it to favour the company of both. Examples of the yaksha associating with the parvan abound in Indian art. So we note the figures of yakshas and yakshiṇīs at Bharhut mounted on makaras[36]; the yakshas armed with shield and sword on the relief-scenes of Mathurā emerging from a makara's open mouth (Pl. 43*c*); finally the sculptured makara-figures in the Padang Lawas (North-Sumatra) showing a kneeling or standing, heavily armed yaksha placed between the monster's wide open jaws (Pl. 43*b*). Of the original meaning of the water-monster we are reminded if we compare the picture of the makara ejecting a yaksha in Pl. 43*a*, with the pictures of the lotus-stalk at Sānchī we met before in Pl. 5*a, b*. In the latter pictures, too, there is a yaksha being ejected but here this happens through the open jaws not of a makara but of a lotus-parvan. In both cases parvan and makara play the same part with regard to the yaksha; they are interchangeable, which is additional support for our theory on the symbolic equivalence of parvan and makara.

To my knowledge the yaksha as compared with the makara occupies only a secondary position as a parvan-symbol, nor do I know of cases that at the end of the toraṇa-post the former takes the place of the water-monster as was the case with the Javanese-Balinese kidang-figure.

This fact, in my opinion, is to be explained in the same manner as the case of the cow we discussed before (p. 109): the human form of the yaksha differs too much from the parvan-form to allow for a compensation that would produce a resemblance changing the simple equivalence between yaksha and parvan into a twofold one. This precluded the possibility for the yaksha to serve as an independent and adequate symbol, although he was enabled to play a part by associating with the makara and so to serve symbolism, be it in a humble way.

The nāga

Before we enter on our discussion of the nāga as a parvan-symbol we do well to remember that in Indian art the nāga is represented in three ways,

[36] J. Ph. Vogel, *NION*, VIII (1900), p. 270.

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viz, as a many-headed serpent, as a human figure with a hood of cobra-heads over the head, and as a being with a body the upper part of which is human and the lower part that of a twisting serpent, after the manner of a mermaid.

The first form, to which for the time being we restrict our discussion, is already represented at Bharhut and Sānchi and shows here, just as in later art, an uneven number of heads, mostly three, five or seven, the preference being distinctly given to the number five.

In Central Java this theriomorphic figure of the nāga is quite unknown. Even on the narrative reliefs where the text requires its presence — *e.g.* in the story of Muchilinda where the Buddha is supposed to be protected by the coils of the serpent's body — the animal always has a human form. In East-Javanese art and on Bali, however, the roles are reversed: the human nāga is absent whereas reptilian animals are found regularly, although, curiously enough, mostly in their monocephalous form.[37]

In ancient Cambodia the situation is a little different. The human form occurs but rarely, whereas the many-headed, theriomorphic nāga has practically gained a monopoly. It is this motif that occupies a similar place as the makara in Central Java (Pl. 44*a-c*) although it is given even more preference and occurs with greater monotonous regularity than the aquatic monster on Java. Since the 10th century this 'hantise du serpent'[38] gains in importance and at the time of Jayavarman VII becomes the dominant characteristic of Khmer art.

On a closer examination of the Khmer type of nāga we find two ways of representation: one has the serpent's body merging into the polycephalous head without any juncture (Pl. 44*b, c*), the other shows the body ending in a monster-head of the siṃha or makara type and the body of the nāga animal splitting up in a number of necks appearing from the wide open, toothed jaws of that head (Pl. 44*a*; 45*c, d*).

The following development is illustrated on Pl. 45.

After the thick part of the stalk on Pl. 45*a, b* having reached its lowest point it rises to form the S-curve we pointed to before (p. 20), after which it branches out fan-wise. These branches deserve close attention. In Central Java their curved extremities always have a vegetal character (*a*) and the same often is the case with the Khmer toraṇas (*b*), but in subsequent stages of development serpent-heads begin to become discernible in the extremities, ever gaining in distinctness (*c*), until

[37] A relief picture on the peṇḍopo-terrace at the chaṇḍi Panataran shows, however, that the many-headed nāga must have been known in East Java.
[38] G. de Coral Rémusat, *L'art khmer*, p. 51.

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the serpent body with its polycephalous head makes its appearance (*d*). Once this stage has been reached the Khmer sculptor's fancy had free scope to transform the upright leaf-like shoots on the extreme parts of the creepers into a number of variations of the top of the nāga-head, and so appear the various types of this top which were current in the successive styles of Khmer art: the nāga-head ornament with a single 'fleuron', the one after the manner of the Russian 'kokoshnik', the 'diadème en forme de bicorne', etc. (fig. 17).[39]

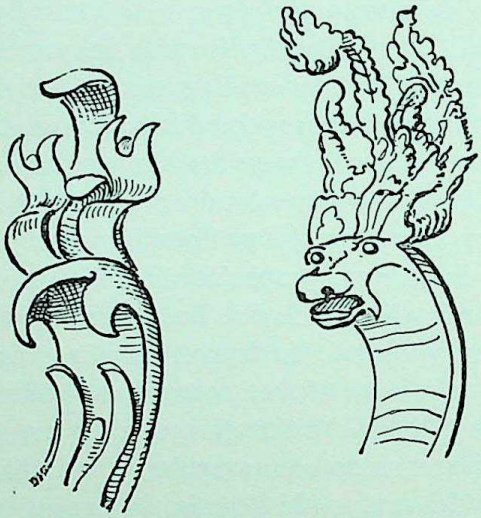

Fig. 17

An even clearer illustration of this evolution is provided by the Khmer bronze-censer in Pl. 46. There are two pedestals supporting this object. From the left one, showing the shape of a four-leaved padmamūla, there emerges a lotus-stalk which after having made a deep curve produces a parvan. From this parvan three stalks issue, the first of which bends downwards forming a second pedestal,[40] similar to the first but now showing three leaves, whilst the second stalk rising straight upwards produces a lotus-leaf folded cup-wise and serving as a censer. The third stalk, the most important one, curves upwards and gradually passes into the many-headed upper part of a nāga-body which serves as the flat handle of the incense burner. So the metamorphosis of a stalk into a nāga has come about as it were under our very eyes.

The above is sufficient to convince us that makara and many-headed nāga are two products of the same stock. Both have their origin in the extremity of the lotus-stalk with its fan-like bundle of creepers. In the one case this basic form developed into the theriomorphic type of a many-headed nāga,

[39] De Coral Rémusat, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[40] The botanical function of this pedestal is not quite clear. Although similar to the padmamūla of the first pedestal, except for the presence of three leaves, it cannot be taken to represent this organ as the appearance of two mūlas on one lotus plant is impossible. I regard it as a parvan forming the extreme part of the downward curving stalk. On the resemblance of mūla and parvan see p. 43.

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in the other case it led to the appearance of the makara illustrated in Pl. 1*b*

This conclusion obviously applies generally and is not restricted to the Khmer representations of the many-headed nāga-family but includes also the Indian nāga wherever it appears in animal and polycephalous aspect, a conclusion which has such a wide bearing that we shall do well to weigh its consequences before turning it to account.

If we ask ourselves in this connection how the natural substratum of the nāga, *i.e.* the serpent *(sarpa)*, developed into the polycephalous reptile of mythology and art, and what the relation is between this reptile and the lotus, our starting-point should be the morphological resemblance of the body of the serpent and the lotus-stalk, which resemblance, as we remarked before, led to their identification (p. 102).

An interesting example of this identification is to be found on Bali, in the *umbul umbul* of fig. 18[41] (the top of a bamboo stem having a piece of cloth as a pennant) on which a nāga-figure is pictured over the entire length. The fact that the crawling body of this nāga has nodes at regular intervals in the same manner as the parvans appear in the lotus stalk clearly demonstrates that the designer who conceived this ornament was well aware of the identity of nāga-body and lotus-stalk.

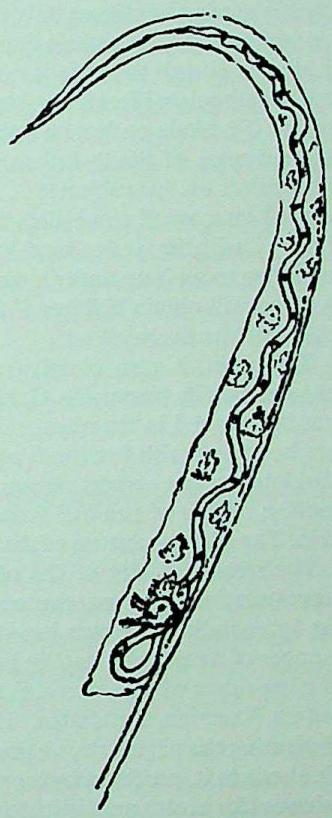

Fig. 18

Once this identification had been brought about, obviously the same evolution set in which we met frequently in the case of other symbolic identifications: the morphological resemblance led to the form acquiring adequate contents, *i.e.* certain Agni and Soma properties of the stalk's sap were transferred to the snake, the stalk's counterpart.

[41] Professor A. J. Bernet Kempers obligingly drew my attention to this picture. I am also indebted to him for the photograph from which fig. 18 has been copied. It goes without saying that to the modern Balinese the picture has lost all of its original sense.

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As a result of this transfer the snake became the bearer of these properties. It entered mythology and from the snake *(sarpa)* sprang the mythical animal (*nāga*).

The character of this nāga-animal presents a pattern of the most typical Soma and Agni properties as is shown in the following brief review.[42]

The nāga is closely related to various liquids of the Soma-class, first of all to the waters. The water is the nāgas' favourite abode. They are mostly found in lakes, ponds, wells, and in the ocean. In Buddhist literature the water-gods Varuṇa and Sāgara have become nāgarājas. Nāgas grant rain to mankind or withhold it, they change into rain clouds and produce rivers.[43] They have the power to absorb the water's rasa and to bestow on others its power to prolong and to stimulate life. Of the latter a curious example is the worship of the so-called Nāgakals or 'snake-slabs' which are often placed in great numbers at the entrance of South-Indian towns and villages. Vogel gives the following particulars on this subject:" . . . the usual practice is to have a figure of a cobra carved on a small stone slab, to place it in a well for six months in order to imbue it with life *(prāṇa-pratishṭhā)* by means of mantras and certain ceremonies, and then to set it up under a *pīpal* (aśvattha) or *nīm*-tree . . . It is believed that a woman will obtain children if she walks round the tree 108 times daily for 45 days consecutively."[44]

The nāga is also closely related to the pre-eminently Soma-liquid, the amṛita. For its possession Garuḍa and the nāgas engage in deadly battle. The amṛita is found in the nāga-loka where it is produced by the nāgas. The nāgas are honoured with five kinds of nectar and their venom, if administered as an antidote against vegetal poison, operates like amṛita. As for the Soma-liquid itself, a stream of strained Soma is compared with a snake creeping out of its skin. The nāga-ancestress of the Cambodian dynasty is called Somā.

The strong affinity of the nāga to the lotus belongs to the same class of representations. Our conclusion as to the close relation between the nāga and the lotus-stalk which was based on morphological grounds is borne out by a number of remarkable data in Indian literature and folklore. So we meet names of nāga-rulers which often are denominations of the lotus (*e.g.* Padma, Mahāpadma, Kumuda, Puṇḍarīka, Utpalaka). I also refer to the many stories illustrating the nāga's strong preference for the lotus-pond. He swims in it, has his abode in it, produces by his magical powers wonderful lotuses, in a word he behaves like a lotus amongst lotuses.

A direct result of the nāga's Soma-character is the power to bestow fertility, to dispel sterility and to heal sickness. Like all the members of the Soma-family the nāgas operate as donors of prosperity and opulence, grantors of wishes, owners of valuable treasures and guardians of these treasures. The nāga shares these powers with the jewel and the conch, hence his close relation with these

[42] The following data are taken from J. Ph. Vogel's *Indian Serpent Lore*, 1926.

[43] *Op. cit.*, pp. 32, 33, 115, 209, 244.

[44] *Op. cit.*, p. 270. For the worship of the snake-slabs see also Sundaram, "South-Ind. Serpent Lore", *Quart. JMyth. Soc.*, XXII (1932) Boulnois, *La caducée et la symbolique dravidienne indo-méditerranéenne de l'arbre, de la pierre, du serpent et de la déesse mère*, 1939.

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objects. The śaṅkha is his attribute and often the word *śaṅkha* is part of nāga-names, just as the word *maṇi*. The nāgas' headdress *(chūḍā)* is often decorated with a jewel and frequently they possess a wishing-jewel or a jewel that can recall the departed to life.

As *vāch* is essentially one with the aquatic element (p. 53), it is not surprising that the great mass of representations associated with this notion also had a considerable influence on the formation of the nāga-character. This vāch-association explains why the nāgas are said to display great musical skill, particularly on the flute, to possess magic musical instruments and also to excell in other arts, like architecture. They are given praise for the wonderful works of art they produced in Nāgārjuna's time. It is also remarkable that in folklore-literature nāgas often appear disguised as scholars and priests (as brahman, ascetic, bhikshu, etc.) or are supposed to be mighty magicians, or to possess sacred books and charms. The Buddhist canonical writings are entrusted to the care of the nāgas. The text of the Prajñāpāramitā was for many centuries in their custody before it were given to the world.

Compared with these briefly summarized Soma-properties, the Agni-qualities in the nāga-character are quantitatively scarce. As a matter of fact, only one is mentioned again and again and distinctly outlined, *viz.* the fire-like effect of the nāga-poison on its surroundings. This *tejas*, the heat or glow of the nāga-poison, as is generally known, plays an important part in Indian legends, *e.g.* the fire-duel between the Buddha and the nāga of Uruvilvā, or the nāga Takshaka who by his fiery bite burnt a banyan-tree and then set the palace of king Parikshit on fire.

Let us now consider the genesis of the nāga's many-headed form, the very characteristic that gives it its mythical nature.

With regard to this problem we should take into consideration that the oldest data do not warrant the presumption that of old the nāga was figured as a polycephalous reptile. So in the absence of proof to the contrary, we may safely assume that at the outset the mythical serpent was thought of as a monocephalous animal. This notion, however, must have changed from the moment that the nāga's body was identified with the lotus-stalk (p. 102), with the inevitable result that the animal's head was identified with the extremity of the stalk. And as this end in art had assumed the aspect of a fan-shaped bundle of creepers, the next result was a dividing up of the extreme part of the nāga-body into a number of necks and heads. This completed the identification of nāga and lotus-stalk and brought about the ever-desired effect of making the symbol, both in form and in nature, approximate as near as possible to the vegetal organ that was to be symbolized.

But comparison and identification did not end here, which, considering the Indian mind, is only natural.

We may illustrate this with the following example.

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The human arm frequently occurs as a symbol of the lotus-stalk — we shall refer to this again — and as the nāga fulfils the same part it follows, in acordance with the rule of identification through a concealed third, that the arm is identified with the serpent's body and that also the spread-out fingers are identified with the hood of nāga-heads. This explains why in literature the nāga is so often compared and identified with the five-fingered human hand,[45] and why, inversely, the nāga-head in art not infrequently shows a remarkable resemblance to the human hand with fingers turned in like claws (Pl. 47*a-b*). The number of the nāga-heads being five may be traced to the same identification with the fingers of the hand.

The above sketch of the development of the serpent into a nāga, though partly only hypothetical, is essential for our purpose of explaining some features in connection with the relation between makara and nāga. A brief remark on this subject will now be sufficient.

Since the nāga-body appears to be the equivalent of the lotus-stalk and the polycephalous head to have originated from the same parvan-form as the makara, we shall not be surprised to meet representations in which either the entire lotus-stalk, including the extremity, has been substituted by the entire nāga-body including the head, or the stalk has been replaced by the nāga-body and the end of the stalk has assumed the aspect of the makara-head. Three examples will illustrate this.

1) The pilaster-ornament of Māmallapuram which we met before (p. 26) shows a number of interesting substitutions as mentioned above (Pl. 7*b*). First, the curved stalk has been replaced by the crawling body of the serpent; secondly, at the points where the stalk — or in our case the serpent-body — divides in two, makara-heads have been put in the place of the primary parvans; finally, the ends of the parts split off have been changed into nāga-heads as a substitute of the secondary parvans.

2) The Tibeto-Burmese manuscript of the Mo-so mentioned on p. 24 shows the picture of the bird Garuḍa sitting on the top of the Cosmic Tree with two snake bodies hanging from its beak (Pl. 47*d*). As the Garuḍa in this position, as we shall see later, is a particular manifestation of the brahmamūla and plays the same part as the kāla-head elsewhere, it is clear that the snake bodies emerging from the Garuḍa's beak have a similar function as the toraṇa-posts issuing from the kāla-mouth.[46] These bodies therefore serve as stalk-symbols.

[45] Hopkins, *Epic Myth.*, p. 28: "The arm ends in five fingers, and is first said to be like a fat, smooth snake, then like a five-headed (the fingers) snake."

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3) Finally, I mention the posts serving as a frame for the tympana of Khmer monuments (Pl. 44*a*). As these posts end in, and are as it were organically grown together with, the nāga-heads mentioned before, it is evident that these posts are to be regarded as a strongly stylized rendering of the nāga-body.

On the basis of this view we are inclined to ask whether the toraṇa-posts in architectural styles outside Cambodia are also meant to represent the nāga-body. There is all the more reason for this question when we consider that the Khmer-post has a feature likewise appearing on the Hindu-Javanese counterpart we met before (p. 35) but which could not then be explained with the aid of the available data. I have in mind the narrow edge on either side of the post which on Java is never decorated but in Khmer art, though sometimes also smooth (Pl. 44*b, c*), often has its own decoration different from that of the middle band (Pl. 44*a*). Now, the natural snake-body has similar smooth edges where dorsal and abdominal scales meet showing on either side the animal's bare skin over the whole length of the body. Consequently, as the edges in question appear to be part of the anatomy of the snake-body, there is no doubt that wherever this feature appears on toraṇa-posts we are dealing with a remnant of the reptile character that originally was peculiar to these posts.

There is another point which may throw light on the reptilian character of the toraṇa-post. I recall Groneman's statement (p. 129) about the difference between the *kris* with a straight and the one with a twisting blade, respectively identified with the *sarpa-tapa,* the snake at rest, and the *sarpa-lumaka,* the moving, crawling snake. This distinction appears to apply not only to the kris but also to the toraṇa-post. If we have a straight, or only slightly curved, post before us, then it represents the *sarpa-tapa,* whereas a sharply curved or twisting or looping post, such as often is found in South-Indian architecture, represents the *sarpa-lumaku.* All this leads us to a slight emendation of our former theory about the nature of the Javanese toraṇa-post (p. 36): this post does not represent the lotus-stalk but its symbolic substitute, the nāga-body.

Viewed from this angle, the Khmer toraṇa-post did not deviate from the natural pattern as far as the Hindu-Javanese type. In the case of the former the lotus-stalk with its parvan is represented by the nāga-body and its polycephalous head, whereas on Java and in India this is replaced by a hybrid formation consisting of snake-body and makara-head.

[46] Except for the important fact that here the nāga heads disappear in the garuḍa's beak showing the nāga-bodies turned in a direction opposite to that of the toraṇa-posts. I am quite in the dark as to the meaning of this quaint and unique divergence.

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E. SYMBOLS OF THE BRAHMAMŪLA

In the preceding paragraphs we have dealt with the padmamūla and the parts of the plant connected with it. We now proceed to the higher parts of the Tree, and of these first of all the root of the fig-tree implanted on the terrestrial lotus claims our attention. We shall see this organ functioning in two ways, *viz.* associated with the two lateral branches emerging from it and figuring as the toraṇa-top, and secondly as the top of the stem of the Tree which is usually changed into a column, a pole, a standard, and such like.

In the first place we deal with the first-mentioned form, the other being reserved for our discussion of the stambha-symbols.

The lion's head

Referring to my previous remarks on the distinction between Agni and Somasymbols and their application as symbols of the brahma- and padmamūla (p. 100), we shall first dwell on the kāla- or lion's head-motif, the brahmamūla-symbol which, as a toraṇa-top, specially on Java, enjoyed unparalleled popularity.

Why the lion's head was considered appropriate for the brahmamūla-function is not hard to guess. As I remarked before (p. 40), the animal's nose could easily be identified with the bulbous root and the flowing mane lent itself perfectly for identification with the drooping or rising top of the celestial fig-tree.

This similarity in form being sufficient cause to identify the lion's head with the mūla, the lion's nature provided an equally strong motive. Of all animals the lion has the closest relation to Agni, as this god is reputed to possess flashing, golden, or iron teeth and enormous jaws or 'lion's jaws', to leap and to roar like a lion, to force his way, by means of his flames, through the wood like a lion, and to be an all-devourer, a feaster upon raw meat, like the king of animals.[47] So, just as the spherical water-vessel could be an ideal representative of the padmamūla on account of its mūla-shape and its aquatic nature, so the lion's head was an equally suitable equivalent of the brahmamūla both for its appearance and its fiery nature.

This dual equivalence, both with the fig-tree and with Agni, will be a great help in finding an explanation of a number of notions connected with the kāla-motif which so far have been obscure.

[47] Senart, *Légende du Bouddha*, p. 184.

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Vanaspati

One of these problems is expressed in the question, often repeated and answered in various ways: what could be the meaning of the strange name *vanaspati* (or *banaspati*) given to the East-Javanese form of the lion-head motif.[48]

On this question I submit the following. The name 'banaspati' meaning 'lord of the wood' is applied both to very big trees, particularly the aśvattha and the nyagrodha, and to Agni whenever this god's flames are compared with the branches of a tree.[49] So the name *banaspati* was thrust upon the lion-head from two quarters, *viz.* from the lord of the woods and from the god of fire, with both of whom it was considered to be identical. It is small wonder, then, that the name was transferred to the lion-head-motif and remained attached to it after other less typical designations which in Hindu-Javanese times must have been current for the same motif had become obsolete.

Kāla

This name of the Central-Javanese form of the lion-head-motif which hitherto has not been satisfactorily explained either, probably belongs to the same class of notions. The fact that Kāla, the god of Time, is known as the 'all-devourer'[50] probably provided the tertium comparationis between this god and the two chief all-devourers, Agni and the lion. The identification of Kāla and the lion resulting from this comparison explains why Kāla is given a demoniacal appearance with lion-head, -mane and -claws, and on the other hand why the manifestation of the mūla in its lion-head appearance was called kāla. This name, too, probably was one of many applied to the lion-head-motif in the Central-Javanese period.

The sun

Before proceeding to an explanation of some other peculiarities of the lion-head motif we should dwell for a moment on the Deopara-inscription mentioned before (p. 95).

[48] With regard to this name cf. J. Brandes, *Tjandi Djago*, 1900, p. 26; W. H. Rassers, "Over de oorsprong van het Javaansche tooneel" (On the origin of the Jav. theatre), *BKI*, 88 (1931), p. 272; K. A. H. Hidding, "De beteekenis van de kekajon" (The meaning of the kekayon), *TBG*, LXXXI (1931), p. 637.

[49] Coomaraswamy, "The Inverted Tree", *QJMyth. Soc.*, XXIX (1938-39), pp. 126, 129, 148; id. "The Yakṣa of the Vedas and Upaniṣads", *ibid.*, XXVIII (1937-38), p. 234; J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie*, II, p. 63.

[50] J. Scheftelowitz, *Die Zeit als Schiksalsgottheit in der ind. und iran. Rel.*, 1929, pp. 18, 26, 29.

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It will be remembered that the 26th strophe of this inscription states that king Vijayasena had a temple built for the god Pradyumneśvara which was compared with the cosmic mountain (Mahāmeru) on which the afternoon-sun rests, and that this celestial body when rising and setting in the same manner settles on the eastern and the western mountain. This cosmic mountain, according to the inscription, is like a tree-stem whose branches are the four points of the compass and is placed between the firmament and the centre of the ocean. This is the only pillar to support the abode of the three worlds and of all mountains the only one worth mentioning.

Some of these notions we have met already, *viz.* that of the cosmic mountain emerging from the centre of the ocean and as stambha supporting the firmament, and also that of the stem of the World-Tree splitting up in four branches in the direction of the four points of the compass.

There are, however, some important new features, first that the sun in its zenith rests on the top of the pillar, and, secondly, that there are two mountains, the Udaya- and Asta-giri, on which the celestial light settles when it rises and sets.

With regard to the first of these features I pointed out before the striking correspondence between the notion of the sun settling daily on the cosmic pillar and figuring as its top, and the story in the Siṃhāsanadvātriṃśikā mentioning a golden pillar placed in the centre of a lake and bearing a bejewelled throne. Day by day, from sunrise till noon, the pillar rises till it touches the disc of the sun and afterwards sinks again to the water's level.

Now if we co-ordinate the above data about the sun represented as the pillar's top and the fact that the brahmamūla, too, is placed on the top of the cosmic pillar being the trunk of the World-Tree, this leads us to the important conclusion that the sun at the moment of reaching its zenith and settling on the top of the cosmic pillar coincides with the mūla of the celestial fig-tree (cf. particularly the picture on Pl. 18*e* representing the primeval waters at the beginning of creation on which floats the cosmic egg from which the three-branched cosmic Tree is produced whilst on the top of the stem of this Tree, at the juncture of the branches where the brahmamūla is situated, the radiant disc of the sun is to be seen).

From this it follows that not only the spherical bodies cover each other but that their symbolical appearances do the same.

It goes without saying that this had far-reaching consequences, for not only the mūla but the sun, too, has of old been the centre of an extensive and widely variegated complex of mythical and symbolical

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representations. I only need to recall the Vedic manifestations of Sūrya and of the sun-god as a chariot, a wheel, a chakra, a jewel, Sūrya's eye, Brahman's eye, a golden swing, a golden boat, a red or golden eagle, a flamingo, a calf, a white-winged or spotted bull, a white horse, or a doorway through which Brahman's lighted sky is visible,[51] not to mention the equally numerous post-Vedic representations.

Now, if the sun and the brahmamūla were considered to coincide and to become identical, it was bound to happen that also the symbolic complexes of which both spherical bodies were the centre were brought into contact and wholly or partly became fused, this again giving rise to a number of identifications, contaminations and hybridisations between sun- and mūla-symbols.

In addition to the interplay of these influences we shall in our further examination have to take into account those cases in which a mūla-symbol was ousted from its place on the stambha-top and replaced by a Sūrya-symbol. The important result is that in the case of the brahmamūla-symbols, unlike the padmamūla-symbols, the criterium of form often does not apply. If, for instance, as a stambha top-piece an eagle, a boat or some other object or being is found, in shape altogether different from the spherical mūla, it clearly indicates that a brahmamūla-symbol on the stambha top has been replaced by a Sūrya-symbol.

As if to obscure still more these complicated and confusing relations, the symbolism connected with the stambha-top probably was subjected to still an other influence apart from the Sūrya-complex: there is reason to believe that according to the Indian conception the moon in its nocturnal course, just like the sun by day, at the moment when it reaches its zenith and its fullest phase, ascends the stambha-top and coincides with the brahmamūla, the results obviously being similar to those of Sūrya's ascension although in symbolism they are less conspicuous.

The alternate ascension of the stambha-top by the sun and the moon is in my opinion one of the causes of the obscurities and irregularities of the classification-system referred to above (p. 89). Originally, the brahmamūla must have been closely connected with Agni and the padmamūla with Soma (p. 100) but this evidently changed when in Rig-Vedic times the identification of moon and Soma was effected, which paralleled the identification of Sūrya and Agni, probably dating from an earlier period. The alternate occupation by sun and moon of the stambha-top from then onwards resulted in an alternate identification of the brahmamūla with Agni and Soma, whilst the padmamūla in each case was

[51] Macdonell, *Vedic Myth.*, p. 30 ff.; A. B. Keith, *Rel. and Phil. of the Veda*, p. 45.; W. Kirfel, *Kosmographie*, p. 18 ff.; J. Hertel, *Die Himmelstore im Veda und Awesta*, 1924; *Die Arische Feuerlehre*, 1925, p. 12 ff.

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identified with the antipole of either of these two forces of nature. This explains that the Soma-liquid appears in close connection now with the underworld — being the essence drawn from the primeval waters — now with the celestial tree *(aśvatthaḥ somasavanaḥ)*. Parallel with this are the notions which place Agni in its turn now in the underworld waters (as Vaḍavāgni, the demonic 'fire of the mare's mouth', mentioned among Vishṇu's avatāras and identified with the sun[52]), now in the heaven of light as Sūrya.

These notions, when being reflected in symbolism, were particularly influential in the phenomenon referred to before that a number of objects and beings, suitable by their shape to perform the symbol-function, are used as substitutes of the parts both of the celestial and of the terrestrial tree, *i.e.* they belong to the symbols with dual equivalence.

This is by no means the final word on the numerous complicated problems connected with the relation between Agni and Soma, less so as no doubt other influences have been at work,[53] partly coinciding with and supporting existing conditions, partly obstructing and dislocating them. Under these circumstances it may well be asked if the Indians themselves always knew the road through this labyrinth of notions.

Sun-myths

A few examples may serve to illustrate the above remarks on the Sūrya-symbolism in connection with the cosmic Tree.

The first one belongs to a group of stories to which J. Przyluski drew the attention and which deal with a golden quadruped or golden bird which everyday takes a leap, or starts a flight, in order to light upon a tree.[54] So the Vinaya of the Mahāsāṃghikas has the story of a hunter who day by day sees the king of the deer float in the air and afterwards light on the branch of a banyan-tree. Its body, it is said, spread a glow which set the hill-slopes on fire.

In the Palāsa-jātaka mentioned above (p. 72) we find the same motif with a few characteristic additions. Here the solar animal is the bodhisattva who in the figure of a golden goose regularly settles on a tall palāśa-tree. In spite of the bodhisattva's warnings this tree falls a prey to the epiphytical growth of a nyagrodha through a seed of this tree dropping in the fork of the palāśa's branches. This seed grows into a giant tree which causes the palāśa to die down to the stump of the stem.

It strikes us that the point in this kind of stories is not so much the solar nature of the golden animal involved but the association of this sun-

[52] Hopkins, *Epic Myth.*, p. 99, 204, 218.

[53] I have particularly in mind the churning of the milk-sea, and the ritual kindling of fire (see Held, *Mahābhārata*, p. 140 ff.)

[54] "Deux noms indiens du Dieu Soleil", *BSOS*, VI (1930-32), p. 457 ff.; "Les Salva", *JA*, 214 (1929), p. 311 ff.

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motif with the cosmic Tree-theme. The image which these stories call up in the listener's mind not only refers to the celestial body floating through space like a golden animal but also to the equally lofty image of the Tree of creation on the top of whose stem, the pillar of heaven, the solar animal settles day by day.[55]

Kāla and Sūrya

If we now return to the monster-head and ask ourselves whether a solar nature must be attributed to the Kāla-motif, the reply must be that, viewed in its macrocosmic context, the head indeed is identical with the sun, subject to this important reservation that the identity only applies for the moment when at noon the sun reaches its zenith. In that single moment Sūrya figures as the top of the cosmic pillar and coincides with the kāla-head substituted for the brahmamūla. At all other times both are separate.

Although it follows from this that the kāla may not simply be regarded as a solar symbol,[56] on the other hand the head admittedly was strongly influenced by Sūrya-symbolism. Distinct indications of this are to be found *e.g.* in East-Javanese and Balinese decorative motifs — banaspatis, antefixes, karangans, etc. — in which the two-eyed monster-head has been replaced by the one-eyed one, Sūrya's eye (Pl. 51*d*, *e*). Furtherhmore, there are Khmer forms of the monster-head showing the mane and the teeth of the lion-head linked into flame-shaped protuberances so as to imitate the disc of the sun surrounded by rays (Pl. 51*c*).

The mountains of the rising and the setting sun

It is quite a common feature in Hindu-Javanese art that the two makaras at the end of the toraṇa-posts are supported by pilasters of different sizes and decorated in various manners (Pl. 9*a*). The fact that, also in Indian architecture, such pilasters are frequently applied goes to prove that the Hindu-Javanese motif originated in India and, together with so many other forms of art, secured its place in 'colonial' tradition.

This point having been established the question rises what the meaning of these pilasters could be.

[55] I refer in this connection to the Balinese Sūrya throne on which Siwa in the figure of the sun god daily sits down to receive hommage from the faithful. W. F. Stutterheim, "Een interessante Sūrya-zetel van Noesa Penida" (An interesting Sūrya-throne on N.P.), *BKI*, 92 (1935), p. 206 ff.

[56] Cf. Mus, "Barabuḍur", p. 140: "Pour tout dire, dans le domaine où se circonscrit notre recherche, il n'y a pas de mythes solaires. Il n'est de mythe que cosmique."

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This question, too, probably finds its answer in the Deopara-inscription stating that the sun in its daily rising and setting rests on two mountains, the Udaya- and Astagiri, whereas at noontide it settles on the top of the cosmic Tree.

Now, if we remember that the cosmic Mountain is usually represented as a column or pilaster, it seems very probable that, conversely, the pilaster, wherever it appears, is meant to represent a mountain.[57] If we combine this with the close relation between the toraṇa-top and the sun in its zenith, it is no bold guess that a similar relation exists between the toraṇa-ends and the sun at the start and the finish of its course. It follows that the toraṇa appears in its macrocosmic aspect as the image of the sun's course whose ends are supported by two terrestial mountains in the shape of pillars and representing the Udaya- and the Astagiri.

In this connection a remarkable wayang-figure deserves our attention (Pl. 49*b*). It represents a four-armed Śiva (called on Java Batara Guru), standing on his vāhana the Nandin and overarched by a toraṇa whose ends are formed by the well-known kidang-heads (p. 131). The arch is supported on either side by a flaming monster-head which in its turn is supported by a pillar-shaped elevation. Round the god's head clouds are floating and in the right-hand top-corner a crescent moon is visible. Other specimens also show an octagonal star between the clouds.

In accordance with our previous remarks the explanation of this figure is obvious: the toraṇa represents the sun's orbit arching over the firmament and its clouds, moon, and stars, whilst the two monster-heads on the pillar-shaped elevations represent the sun settling on the Udayagiri and the Astagiri when it rises and sets.

The question rises if we are still dealing with the same representation when the two solar symbols are present but the mountain-pillars supporting these symbols are lacking.

This question may be asked when we examine the fine and elaborately decorated East-Javanese breast-ornament on Pl. 49*a*[58] (from about 1350-1400 A.D.) Apart from the point mentioned, an analysis of this piece presents no difficulty. From the padmamūla placed just below the centre and presented as an eight-spoked wheel[59] the Tree-stem rises represented by a decorated pillar and topped by the brahmamūla in the shape of a monster-head of East-Javanese style. From this head

[57] Cf. *AV*, XIII, 1, 47, where the mountains of this earth are called *yūpas* or 'sacrificial pillars'.
[58] For a detailed description of this piece see Th. P. Galestin, *Cult. Ind.*, I (1939), pp. 73 ff.
[59] This symbolic form of the mūla will be discussed later together with the stambha.

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emerge on either side the side-branches of the Tree-motif (the equivalents of the toraṇa-posts) represented by two flat bands with grooved edges (cf. p. 35) which meet under the padmamūla after having been twice interrupted by monster-head-shaped parvans. The stem is flanked by two chakras whose shape differs slightly from that of the padmamūla.

The question now is whether these chakras have the same meaning as the monster-heads of the wayang-figure, in other words, whether here, too, they are to be regarded as sun-symbols representing Sūrya's chakra starting and finishing its daily flight through space. Though this interpretation is tempting, it does not quite satisfy us on account of the fact that the golden ornament lacks the two mountain-pillars and that the two chakras have been placed inside the frames of the toraṇa-arches instead of supporting these arches like the monster-heads in the case of the wayang-figure. Are we dealing with a poetic licence on the part of the artist? Or is our interpretation untenable? It is hard to say, and I shall have to leave these questions undecided.

The demon's head

After this excursion we return to the toraṇa-top. There is a vast group of beings related to the lion whose heads, incidentally or permanently, may serve as symbolic substitutes of the brahmamūla. As a rule these beings are provided with a luxurious wide flowing mane or crop of hair which they wear as an unmistakable token of their close relation both with the celestial tree and with the god Agni. After our remarks on the siṃha-kāla-motif it goes without saying that the head here takes the place of the actual mūla, the hair or mane being the equivalents of the tree's branches or Agni's flames.

To this class of beings belong in the first place demoniacal beings like the yaksha and the rākshasa, both equally known for their shaggy crop of hair and for another feature which they have in common with the god of fire: their insatiable gluttony and particularly their keenness on human flesh, qualities which are highly recommendable for playing the part of the brahmamūla-symbol.

It is not surprising, then, that the monster-head as a toraṇa-top is often given a human face with demon's features (East Java, Bali, Cambodia) and also that this head is transformed into the upper part of a male body by the addition of a pair of arms, or, more accurately, by giving the side-branches of the mūla indicated in fig. 11 the shape of a pair of arms (Pl. 50*a-d*).

In this manner the demon of the eclipse Bhaṭāra Rāhu has been depicted

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on the Belahan slab,[60] Pl. 50*a*, showing the moment when — as a true *grahaṇa*, 'seizer' — he has seized the sun-disc with both arms and is ready to devour it. This is the very moment that Sūrya has reached the zenith of its orbit and coincides with — or in symbolic terms: is devoured by or disappears in — the mūla-symbol, that in this case is the monster-head.

The kala-songsang

As we remarked before Indian tradition, apart from the normal celestial tree, also knows the inverted tree with its root growing upwards and its branches hanging downwards. This is the same mystery tree which to the present day is known amongst several Indonesian people as *waringin songsang*, 'the inverted banyan', and plays an important part in their legends, games, riddles, incantations and suchlike.

As the banyan's inverted position demands the inversion of the tree's symbolic appearance as well, this probably explains the remarkable pictures of inverted kāla-figures, the *kala-* or *buta-songsang,* which are best known on Bali but also occur outside the Javanese-Balinese cultural sphere.

The oldest example of such a songsang-motif to my knowledge is to be found on one of the reliefs at the East-Javanese bathing-place Jalatuṇḍa (977 A.D.), Pl. 51*a*, representing, as I demonstrated on another occasion,[61] the meeting of the ascete Palasara and Batara Brahma. This god, just as in the younger Javanese tradition, is here identified with the god Agni and is pictured as a pillar of fire in the shape of a misshapen human body, surrounded by flames which, lying on its breast with arms folded on either side of the body and its leonine head uplifted, rests on a lotus-cushion, the body being turned upside down, whilst the legs, only one of which is clearly visible, swing overhead in the air.

Another example is the Balinese kala- or buta-songsang which appears as a constellation and as a decorative motif. Unlike the Jalatuṇḍa demon this kala-figure is strictly symmetrical but here, too, the body is inverted and rests on breast and hands whilst the legs stick up in the air (Pl. 51*b*).

A Balinese variation of the same motif represents a winged bull also inverted, and a Cham siṃha of relatively late date (11th to 15th century) performs similar antics.[62]

Some more examples of 'songsanged' motifs will be discussed in a later paragraph.

[60] For a description and discussion of this piece see W. F. Stutterheim, *BKI*, 92 (1935) pp. 196 ff.
[61] *Cult. Ind.*, VII (1945) pp. 12, 29.
[62] *ABIA*, IX (1934), p. 24 and pl. VIII c.

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The garuḍa

In the present class of brahmamūla-symbols the garuḍa-figure occupies only a modest place. As far as can be ascertained Indian nor Hindu-Javanese art show examples of this bird serving as a toraṇa-top, and in Cambodia, too, the examples are rare.[63] Even so, its appearance in these rare cases deserves our attention (Pl. 49*c*), the more so as there is little resemblance between the sharp-beaked bird and the round mūla, and consequently something else must have caused it to take the place of the usual monster-head motif in the centre of the lintels.

The explanation is undoubtedly that the garuḍa as a manifestation of Sūrya — who is often compared and identified with objects and beings that float, fly, and move archwise through space — originally does not belong to the mūla-symbols but as a sun-symbol found an opportunity to settle on the top of the cosmic stambha identifying himself with the mūla and incidentally functioning as a mūla-symbol (cf. p. 142).

This explanation is borne out by the drawing in the Mo-so-manuscript mentioned before (p. 124, Pl. 47*d*). This image of the bird sitting on the top of the cosmic Tree and wreathed in its feathers like the sun in its rays removes all doubt as to the garuḍa acting as a solar symbol and as a manifestation of the brahmamūla.

It is interesting to note how well this explanation fits in with the well-known myth of the stealing of the amṛita in which Garuḍa has the leading part. According to the description of this theft in the Ādiparva (33) the bird on its flight through space observes ahead a rotating wheel with sharp edges like knives and resembling the sun. It makes itself small, passes through the spokes of the wheel and then sees at the bottom the bodies of two giant-serpents with flashing teeth, the guardians of the amṛita. It seizes the kumbha with the amṛita from its hiding-place behind the wheel and makes good its escape.

It will appear later that the wheel frequently figures as a brahmamūla-symbol, and here, too, it undoubtedly plays the same part. It functions as the container of the amṛita and is accompanied by two serpents which we know to be the equivalents of the two lateral branches of the Basic Form emerging from either side of the brahmamūla. So we find in the highest heaven the symbolic equivalent of the kāla-makara-toraṇa consisting of the wheel in the centre flanked by the two serpents. It is now the part of the sun-bird Garuḍa to occupy this central

[63] Except for the Phnom Kulên period (end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th century) during which the garuḍa frequently appears as a toraṇa-top. Cf. *BEFEO*, XXXVIII (1938), Pl. XLVII B and C, XLVIII, A, B and C.

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place: after soaring upwards through space it reaches the wheel, makes itself small and passes through the spokes, *i.e.* it identifies itself with the brahmamūla and in that moment occupies in the cosmic Tree organism the same place as the giant-bird in the Mo-so-picture (Pl. 47*d*). It is the very moment in which the sun-bird passes through the zenith of its orbit and then proceeds on its flight through space.

F. SYMBOLS OF THE STEM OF THE TREE

1. INTRODUCTION

We remarked before that the distinction between straight and twisting which applies to kris, nāga and toraṇa-post also applies to the growing habit of the lotus-stem (or rather rhizome). The symbols of the stem, therefore, appear in two main forms, one based on the stem winding upwards, the other on the stem rising up straight.

The former are by far in the minority and I know of only two examples, firstly the nāga with the upper part in the form of a human body (see p. 133) to which we shall revert later, and secondly the Javanese or Balinese kris when it has the appearance of, or a function analogous to that of the main stem. This is the case with the Balinese kris on Pl. 82*b* as appears from the fish-shaped pedestal in which the weapon rests or, expressed symbolically, from which it springs and rises just like the lotus-stem from its padmamūla (cf. on the fish as a padmamūla-symbol p. 107 and Pl. 25*b, c*).

If the main stem is straight, it will it appear in three forms: as the top of the cosmic mountain, as a pillar or similar object, or as Purusha, the Great Man, which means both the deity and the man *par excellence*, the ruler.

The appearance of the deity as a manifestation of the stem is an indication that in the representations we are now to discuss religious elements will have a greater part than before and will place us before new problems.

If we review once more the notions which are at the base of Indian ideas about the Tree and its relation to Life, we find at the initial point the fiery creative breath entering the primeval waters and begetting the Golden Germ containing the amṛita which is Life itself. This life rises up from the root through the stem and becomes visible to human eyes as it manifests itself first in the single straight stem, then in the five branches of the cosmic Tree and finally spreading out a thousandfold in leaves,

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flowers, fruits, animals, human beings, demons and gods, in short in all animate creatures.

This life is sacred and divine in whatever form it appears. Whether it has the Dionysian Agni or the Apollinian Soma aspect, whether it sears or blesses, destroys or causes to thrive, whether it appears singly or in countless manifestations, it is always and everywhere the same divine principle, to be worshipped above all else.

This notion involves the belief that life manifests itself more vigorously and that its divinity is more pronounced in special organs of the Tree, particularly in the root, but also in the stem, being the part in which the vital forces, before they pass into the mighty top and flow through leaves and branches in all directions, are united into one robust pillar and so form The One, the Tad Ekam of the Vedas and Upanishads, the Sang Hyang Tunggal of Javanese tradition.

This One, this stambha, claims divine adoration not only when in human form it appears as a god or a ruler, but also when as Mahāmeru it supports the firmament, or when as a stem it is part of sacred trees, the earthly representatives of the cosmic aśvattha or nyagrodha, or again when it takes the shape of a pillar or an equivalent object or being and as such has to support one of the many symbolic manifestations of the celestial Tree.

Each of these forms is latent in the others, is identical with them, it can produce them or change into them. There is a cycle of these forms, tree, mountain, pillar, and human body ever changing into each other and in turn being adored as the supreme principle and as such accepting *pūjā* from the faithful.

These ideas through all ages had a prominent place in the Indian conceptions of world and life. They were already voiced in the famous Purushasūkta, RV, X 90, where Purusha, the Great Primeval Man, from whose body the four classes, *varṇas,* are created, is said to possess one thousand heads — or according to AV, XIX, 6, 1 one thousand arms — and one thousand feet, the human equivalent of the cosmic Tree with its thousand branches.

They also find expression in a testimony relatively as late as the Central-Javanese inscription of Kělurak (782 A.D.) that records the erection of an image of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and in which that image successively is identified with a column *(kīrtistambha)* and with a wishing-tree *(kalpataru)*.[64]

[64] F. D. K. Bosch, "De inscriptie van Kěloerak", *TBG,* 68 (1928), pp. 1 ff.

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Many centuries later the ancient myth of the creation of Purusha is revived in a Javanese legend in which the body of the Primeval Man is replaced by that of the cosmic mountain. "The four castes", so according to the Old-Javanese Korawāśrama[65] the story goes, "the brāhmaṇas, the kshatriyas, the waiśyas and the śūdras, are regarded as the body and the energy of the Mahāmeru, that means that the ruler is the top, the brahmans are the eyes, the kshatriyas the neck, the waiśyas the middle and the śūdras the legs of the Mahāmeru. The maharshis call this the 'aṣṭagina jewel', said to produce all kinds of gold, riches, rice, fish, drink, copper, iron and all other things that sustain life." This means that Purusha, in RV X 90 identified with the supreme divine principle whose body provides the material for creation, is here identified with the cosmic mountain and at the same time is represented as a kind of wishing-tree bestowing on mankind all the necessaries of life.

To these examples of cyclical permutation of the chief manifestations of the stem-element many others could be added. After our remarks on the Mahāmeru and the Udaya- and Astagiri we shall in the following paragraphs leave the mountain manifestation aside and reserve our attention for the three remaining stambha forms.

2. THE STEM AS A COLUMN

The expression 'column' includes the various objects that are more or less related to the column, such as pilaster, standard, pole, mast, banner, stalk, stick, post, shaft, and similar objects which share with the stambha the function of supporting and also the elongated shape and vertical position.

As I remarked before, the stem element rarely occurs by itself, as it is mostly associated with other organs of the plant which on occasion may have changed their natural aspect for a symbolized form.

The Indramahotsava

An example of an isolated symbolization or what appears to be such —for certain correspondences will not be altogether absent—is provided by the mast or *dhvaja* which every year, on the occasion of the festival in honour of the god Indra, *Indramahotsava,* used to be erected in the royal residence and probably is still erected as the custom evidently has not

[65] J. L. Swellengrebel, *Korawāçrama,* p. 65.

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become quite extinct.[66] According to time-honoured custom a suitable tree is selected from the wood, with appropriate ceremony felled and stripped of its branches. The stem then, in a solemn procession, is brought to the town and, in the manner of a *kalpataru,* decked out with sunshades, flowers, wreaths, bells great and small, mirrors, fans, and such like. The decorated mast (= stambha) is now slowly and carefully placed on end, the *pāda* or foot is placed and fixed in a socle or *mātṛikā* braced by means of four clamps (= the fourfold form of the padmamūla) and eight cords (= the eight lateral branches of the Tree) are tied to the mast-head, in the direction of the points of the compass, so as to steady it. During the ensuing feast the dhvaja becomes the god Indra himself, the god who in person resides on earth *(bhūmishṭha),* as is shown by the fact that he is called by Indra's names (such as Śakra, Puraṃdara, Śatakratu, Vajrapāṇi); that parts of the tree are called Indra's skull, face, abdomen and legs; that he receives the customary pūjā; and that he becomes the centre of dances, songs, plays, processions, offerings to brahmins, and all other things generally attending the festive homage paid to a mighty god.[67]

In order to arrange our subject conveniently I shall now divide the various representations in two groups, the first one including the cases where the function of the stem as a supporting agent comes to the fore and is associated with the brahmamūla, the second one comprising the cases where the stem is seen rising from its root and so is connected with the padmamūla.

Our discussion of the first group will appear to link up with and to

[66] Meyer, *Trilogie,* III: *Indra, Der altind. Gott der Frühlingssonne und der Fruchtbarkeit und sein Fest.*

[67] Meyer, p. 101. On the *jarjara,* i.e. Indra's banner, erected on the stage during the prelude, see below under *gunungan.*

An interesting example of the cosmic tree appearing as a column is to be found in the Āprī vs. RV I, 17, 11: "O tree, let the sacrificial food go, o god, to the gods. May the giver's splendour be foremost." Oldenberg remarks here (*SBE,* 46, p. 12 n. 1): "To me it is evident that the tree or, to translate more literally, the lord of the forest *(vanaspati)* invoked in this Āprī verse can only be the sacrificial post *(yūpa)* to which the victim was tied before it was killed. The yūpa is called vanaspati in the RV (III 8, 1; III, 6,11) as well as in the more modern Vedic texts (TS I, 8, 6, 1). — In the Āprī hymn IX, 5, 10 the vanaspati is called *sahasravalça* (the thousand branched one). With this should be compared III, 8, 11 (adressed to the yūpa): "O Lord of the forest, rise with a thousand offshoots." — In the Āprī hymn X, 70, 10 the rope is mentioned by which the vanaspati should tie the victim; comp. with this expression the statements of the ritual texts as to the *raçanā* (rope) with which the victim is tied to the yūpa. The meaning of these expressions becomes clear at once, if we explain the vanaspati as the sacrificial post."

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supplement our preceding sketch of the various symbols of the brahmamūla.

The brahmamūla as the centre of the universe

On p. 126 I have dealt briefly with the representations which emphasize the function of the padmamūla as main organ of the Tree and with its central position amongst the other parts of the plant. In this way the padmamūla could be regarded as the centre of the cosmic Tree and as the notions of cosmic Tree and universe run parallel the idea was apt to lead to the notion that the Tree's central organ and the centre of the universe — or, in earthly terms, the ruler's residence, palace or capital — are equivalent.

Our remarks on the padmamūla equally apply to the brahmamūla. This part of the cosmic Tree in its turn may be regarded as the centre of the universe, *i.e.* the residence of the ruler of the universe, the king, or as his palace or capital, which leads to the remarkable conception of a throne, palace or city suspended in the air and supported by one single column, the equivalent from the stem of the Tree.

A characteristic example of a throne supported in this manner we met already in the story of the Siṃhāsanadvātriṃśikā.[68]

The royal residence supported by one column is well known from Ādiparvan XL-XLIII, relating how king Parikshit had such a palace built for himself so that he could escape the vengeance meted out to him by the nāga-ruler Takshaka.

In this connection the Kusanāli-jātaka (no. 121)[69] is specially interesting because it clearly links the column of the palace and the Tree-stem. We are told that once upon a time there was a king whose dwelling had only one pillar to support the roof and that pillar grew shaky. Being told of this the king sent for carpenters and ordered them to put in a sound pillar and make it secure. So the carpenters looked about for a tree that would do and went to the pleasance of the king where they saw a beautiful wishing-tree with straight stem and spreading branches which received great favour of the king. We further read that the carpenter's plan to fell the tree and use it for supporting the palace was foiled by the bodhisattva appearing as a chameleon.

In another story — the Bhaddasāla-jātaka (no. 465) — a king appears

[68] For further references about the yūpa-throne see J. Auboyer, *Le trône et son symbolisme dans l'Inde ancienne*, 1949, pp. 74 ff.

[69] The references to the 'yūpa-throne' and the 'yūpa-palace' are borrowed from J. Przyluski, quoted by J. Auboyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 80 ff.

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who thought to himself: "All over India the kings live in palaces supported by many a column. There is no marvel then in a palace supported by many columns, but what if I make a palace with one column only to support it? Then I shall be the chiefest of all kings." We are not concerned with the remaining part of the story relating how a beautiful tree chosen to be the column for the royal palace was spared this lot, but the king's line of thought is interesting for it indicates that the one-column palace conceived as the world's centre makes its possessor a universal ruler or *chakravartin.*

The same motif is found in the Ghaja-jātaka (no. 454) but in a more elaborate and complete form. Here we are told that Vāsudeva (Kṛishṇa) wishes to possess the city of Dvāravatī and to make it his capital after his conquest of the entire world, *i.e.* after having become a chakravartin. At the approach of the enemy this city is elevated in the air in such a manner that the supporting column comes to be placed on an island in mid-ocean. When the danger is past the city subsides to its former position. The point in this story is not so much the replacement of the royal palace by the imperial capital but the supporting column's position on an island in mid-ocean. This addition completes and rounds off the picture of the cosmic Tree as the story calls it up in the minds of the audience: they see the padmamūla represented by the island (cf. p. 126) and the stem of the Tree symbolized by the column, whilst the brahmamūla finds its counterpart in the capital conceived as the world's centre.

Two tales

The following tale from Buddha's life-story is taken from Chullavaga 5, 8.

In those days, so the story goes, a guildmaster at Rājagṛiha was in possession of a valuable piece of sandal-wood. He took it into his head to have a bowl made out of this wood bearing the inscription: "Whosoever, be he monk or brahmin, is a master of magic art, is free to take this bowl down." He then tied the bowl to a noose which he fastened to the top of a bamboo-stalk which he erected on the top of a series of other stalks. The story goes on to relate how six heretics endeavoured in vain to take possession of the bowl and how Piṇḍola Kāśyapa using his supernatural powers succeeded in gaining his object.

The seemingly insipid tenor of this story appears in a different light when we recognize in the bamboo-stalk the symbol of the stem-element of the cosmic Tree and identify the yellow sandal-wood nap with the golden brahmamūla, the receptacle of the elixir of life. This lends to the guildmaster's contraption the same significance as the dhvaja of the

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Indra festival and makes it the embodiment of the divine principle. It was not only this imposing image that was bound to impress the intelligent listener to the story, he could also learn from it that only a man gifted with supernatural powers was privileged to acquire the golden bowl containing the amṛita of the Good Law.

In an episode appearing in a Southern version of the Rāma epic[70] a congener of the above dhvaja appears on the scene.

We are told that Rāma goes to a fenced-in place in whose centre a tall, steep mast had been erected. On its top a golden fish was fastened and at the foot a vessel filled with water was placed, so as to reflect the image of the fish.

In this queer picture the mast obviously represents the cosmic column, the golden fish the brahmamūla (on the fish as a mūla-symbol cf. p. 107) and the reflection of the fish corresponds with the image of the fish as viewed from the brahmamūla, thus being 'songsanged', or reversed, with respect to this mūla. So with regard to its position at the foot of the mast this reflection plays the part of padmamūla.

The inverted kumbha

Our next example is taken from architecture and is connected with the type of pilaster referred to on p. 113. The foot of this pilaster is placed in a kumbha whilst the shaft either rises from the mouth of the bowl or has grown together with it into a bowl-shaped thickening of the foot of the pilaster (Pl 23*b*, 28*b*, 30*a*, *c*, *d*).

In the case I have now in mind not only the base of the pilaster but also the capital has assumed the kumbha-shape, on the understanding that the lower kumbha shows the normal position, whereas the top one has been inverted; thus the two thickenings form the reflected image of each other. (P. 30*b*).

In passing I may mention that to explain this type of pilaster it has been supposed that the bowl on the top of the pilaster dates from the days of timber architecture when it was customary to place an earthen vessel on a wooden shaft so as to protect it from rain, which construction later on was imitated in stone. Held rightly remarked on this conjecture: "What about the pot at the foot of the pole?"[71] Indeed, if the placing of a bowl on the top of the column had been prompted by utilitarian considerations, it seems a very inefficient idea to place a wooden post in a bowl made of baked clay.

[70] W. F. Stutterheim, *Rama-legenden und Rama-reliefs in Indonesien* (1925), p. 93.
[71] *The Mahābhārata*, p. 208.

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It becomes quite clear that no utilitarian considerations but symbolical requirements were at the bottom of this representation if we consider a precept like Bhāg. Pur. II, 1, 10, 38 to the effect that a lord of the wood (vanaspati) should be placed in a bowl, honoured and presented with sacrificial fires,[72] or the story in the introduction to the Kāliṅgabodhi-jātaka (no. 479) relating that once upon a day Ānanda, wishing to plant a seed of the great Bodhi-tree before the gateway of the Jetavana, cleared out a pit for the tree to stand in, and in it he placed a golden jar which was filled with earth moistened with fragrant water. The instant the seed was dropped in the jar, before the eyes of all up sprang as broad as a plough-head a bo-sapling, fifty cubits tall. On the four sides and upwards shot forth five great branches of fifty cubits in length like the trunk. So stood the tree, a very lord of the forest already, a mighty miracle![73]

As regards the inverted kumbha as a stambha-top, it needs no further comment that we have to regard it as a 'songsanged' brahmamūla-symbol belonging to the same class of representations as the inverted banyan-tree, the inverted kāla-figure and the reflected fish of the Rāma-legend.

Top-pieces

I wish to offer some additional remarks on the vast mass of objects having in common that they consist of two parts: a tall mast or standard and an emblem as a top-piece.

To this group belong in the first place the emblems of dignitaries in the train of princes and gods. These emblems, as the Barabuḍur-reliefs show us, were carried before or after these persons, or were planted in the ground beside them. Further, the stambhas or stationary columns meant as a permanent adornment of palaces, sanctuaries, monasteries and other buildings in whose proximity they were erected[74] (Pl. 52*a*).

Our supposition that in all these cases the pole or standard represents the stem-element of the Tree and that the emblem is a substitute of the brahmamūla is confirmed at a closer inspection of these emblems. We concentrate once again on the Barabuḍur-reliefs.

Jewel, conch, and ball

Of the top-pieces referred to above many belong to the symbols with twofold equivalence we met already as padmamūla-symbols. Amongst

[72] Meyer, *Trilogie*, p. 64.

[73] See also *Śrīchakrasambhārantantra*, in *Tantrik Texts*, VII, p. 35, quoted by P. H. Pott, *Yoga en Yantra*, 1947, p. 70, where kumbhas surmounted by wishing trees laden with flowers and fruit are mentioned.

[74] Krom, *Barabuḍur*, I, II, p. 211.

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these are the jewel and the conch — the latter both winged and not winged — whose identification with the mūla needs no further discussion here (Pl. 52*b-d*), except for a detail in one of the many Barabuḍur-reliefs picturing jewel-topped standards. I have in mind the standard of Pl. 52*b* of the normal type and placed on a small base supported in the right hand by a seated nāgarāja. On close scrutiny we notice that this base has the well-known shape of a natural lotus-root (p. 42, Pl. 16*c*) which indicates that the shaft of the standard is meant to represent a lotus-stem rising from its natural root. This justifies the conclusion that to the sculptor of the relief the standard had not quite become an inanimate object but that to him it still held something of the living, organic, character originally inherent in the standard symbol.

We further find a great number of standards having for their top an object either spherical or flattened to an ellipse, sometimes plain but often adorned with flutes, little balls, pearly edges, and such like (Pl. 53*a, c-e*) and frequently topped again by an emblem (Pl. 52*b, d*). In the former case, that is when only the round object appears, the brahmamūla undoubtedly has been represented in its most elementary shape of sphere or ellipse, whereas the combination of body and emblem goes back to the bipartite shape of the mūla (p. 120).

Finally, I may point out the peculiar trefoil-shape of the top-piece in Pl 53*b* which also occurs with hanging lamps, as a top of the *khakkhara* of the Buddhist monk, and as the centre-piece of the bronze lamp in the former Resink-Wilkens collection (Pl. 38*a*). As in all these objects the jewel-shape is clearly recognizable it is safe to conclude that the trefoil-shape referred to is but a variation of the jewel.

A number of top-pieces are in a class by themselves insofar as they do not, or only rarely, appear as padmamūla-symbols. As characteristic brahmamūla-symbols they are new to us and deserve a somewhat longer digression.

The chakra (discus and wheel)

The chakra owes its suitability for the mūla-symbol function not only to its clear round shape which answers the criterium of form (p. 100), but not in the last place to the fact that 'nave' and 'navel' are coinciding notions — Skr. *nābhi* has both meanings — and the latter word suggests the navel of the primeval being in which according to the well-known cosmic legend the axis of the universe, or the stem of the cosmic Tree, is implanted (p. 55), this identification of the navel and the padmamūla inevitably leading to the identification of wheel-nave and padmamūla.

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It is worth noticing that this identification of chakra and lotus-root did not give rise to representations having the chakra-symbol as the point of origin of ascending or horizontal spiral lotus-scrolls as is the case with other mūla-symbols such as the śaṅkha and the kumbha.[75] Whatever may have been the reason of this, it is certain that as a brahmamūla-symbol the chakra had to play a no less important part when it appeared as the top-piece of the cosmic column, identified with the stem of the Tree, and so occupied the place which Sūrya usually takes on reaching the zenith of its orbit and forming the stambha-top. As Sūrya on his part was also symbolized as the many-spoked wheel used as a discus or cart-wheel (RV I 174, 5; I 175, 4; IV 16, 12; IV 7, 14; VI 56, 3 etc.) both forms, of brahmamūla and Sūrya, situated on the stambha-top coincided and considerably enhanced each other's influence and importance. So it is little wonder that amongst the brahmamūla-symbols the chakra ranks foremost and as a stambha-top occurs more frequently than any other emblem (Pl. 53*f*; 54*a-c*).[76] This is shown by the many Barabuḍur-relief pictures of standards topped bij chakras, and by the many combinations of the chakra and triśūla emblems. We shall revert to this later.

In this connexion I wish draw to the attenton to the remarkable picture on Pl. 54*c* taken from the Picture Section of the Chinese Tripiṭaka. It shows a lotuspond from whose centre the leafy stem (or rather rhizome) of a lotus winds upwards, the stem being topped by an upright wheel. The four world-guardians surrounding the pond indicate that the cosmic lotusplant must be meant. The picture is also noteworthy for the fact that, while elsewhere the standard supporting the emblem emerges from a lotus-root-shaped base (p. 158) showing clearly the vegetal nature of the standard, here the stambha itself appears as a plant and so clearly confirms our opinion on the original vegetal nature of the stambha.

The trident

A number of top-emblems may be reduced to the brahmamūla's particular form pictured on Pl. 55*a-d* having the appearance of a fork with prongs

[75] However, it appears from Hiuen-Tsiang's description of the bodhimaṇḍa (Beal, *Life*, p. 103) that the wheel as padmamūla symbol was not unknown in Indian symbolism. He says: "In the centre of the whole enclosure is the Diamond throne, which was perfected at the beginning of the Bhadra Kalpa, and rose up from the ground when the world was formed. It is the very central point of the universe, and goes down to the golden wheel, whence it rises upwards to the earth's surface."

[76] On the South-Indian chakra-emblem in the Mus. Guimet, Pl. 54*a* (15th century?) which according to Gopinatha Rao (*Elements*, I, 1, p. 288) is called *sudarśanachakra*, see J. Hackin, *RAA*, (1928), p. 65, and *La sculpture ind. et tibét. au Mus. Guimet*, 1931, p. 12.

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bent outwards and curled up at the ends. This twofold fork-shaped mūla contains many embryonic possibilities for development. In one case the prongs wind high upwards and form a number of joints with dentate edges alternately on the inside and the outside of the prongs (Pl. 55*d*). Between the two prongs a third one develops with curled-up end, sometimes replaced by a sharply pointed ornament (Pl. 55*a-d*).

If we compare Pl. 55*a-d* with Pl. 56, 57*a-c* the above tridented form of the brahmamūla is easily recognized as the prototype of the well-known triśūla-emblem. Special attention should be paid to the lotus-buds at the extremity of the prongs on Pl. 57*b*; the floral ornament in the lower half of the trident on Pl. 57*c*, and similar vegetal reminiscenses in which the triśūla's original vegetal form survives.

The trident, as we know, is carried as an emblem of dignitaries in the train of rulers and other distinguished persons and it also plays an important part as an attribute of gods, ceremonial weapon, a top-piece of prayer-bells, stambhas, buildings and many other objects,in short, it is the top-piece *par excellence* suitable for application in a countless number of ways.

I shall not dwell on these applications but only wish to point out that according to the principle of 'identification through a concealed third' (p. 102) the triśūla's prongs may be replaced by other objects resembling the Tree's branches such as the serpent-body and the fiery tongue. So it is not surprising that on the tridented top of the processional staff on Pl. 57*c* both side-prongs have been changed into nāgas and that elsewhere *e.g.* on the top of Buddha-figures, the triśūla appears as a three-tongued flame which form represents the fire-element that, as we know, is closely related to the brahmamūla.[77]

[77] This relation no doubt is responsible for the fact that on the middle prong of the fine South-Indian bronze triśūla on Pl. 56 (Mus. Guimet, presumably 14th cent.) a figure has been placed of the four-armed Sītalādevī with flaming hair, who is the goddess of smallpox and other contagious diseases and is better known by her South-Indian names of Mariyamma and Māriyatala. Hackin, *RAA*, V (1928), p. 65 and *La sculpture ind. et tibét. au Mus. Guimet* (1931), p. 11.
I mention in passing the peculiar fact that the shaft of the trident in the right hand of the Gemuruh Śiva image (*TBG*, 47, Pl. I), at the spot where the hand grasps it, shows two bends giving the impression that the artist was careless or did not understand the nature of his work. But as usual no blame attaches to him. He must have been well aware that the object he depicted, the trident, originally was a lotus stalk and so had to be represented as a flexible shaft yielding to the grip of the hand. The trident of the second Śiva image of Gemuruh shows a similar peculiarity but here the shaft is not bent but winds upwards round the wrist and the forearm in the manner of the stalk of a flower.

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The sunshade

It may seem far-fetched to connect with one or other form of symbolism, particularly the symbolism of the celestial tree, an object like the sunshade that is one of the everyday-necessaries in the courts of Eastern princes and dignitaries, and serves the commonplace need of shade and coolness. Yet there are indications that make this relation plausible.

We first notice the remarkable relief on Pl. 58*b* . The fact that the stūpa-monument pictured here is topped by quite a number of sunshades is not uncommon but it strikes us that, in contrast with the usual practice of placing these objects one above the other on a common mast *(yashṭi)* and gradually diminishing in size, they are here all of the same size and, moreover, individually fixed to a shaft, a curved shaft at that, which gives the impression of a bundle of branches or stalks emerging from the top of the building each one being topped by a leaf-shaped shade.

In this connexion it is worth noticing that with the kalpalatā on Pl. 4*d* the stem ends in a shield-shaped lotus-leaf in two places, *viz.* the lower left-hand corner and behind the bird that is on the left, and that this leaf in respect with the stem has the same position and also shows almost the same shape as the shades above the stūpa-monument referred to.

This suggests a certain relation between lotus-leaf and sunshade and this suggestion finds corroboration in the fact that on Pl. 58*a* the shaft of the chhattra rises from a double lotus-shaped mūla[78] and therefore apparently was conceived as a vegetal organ just like the jewel-topped standard on Pl. 52*b*, from which it follows that the sunshade is on a par with the stambha-tops whose vegetal nature we demonstrated above.

It is further to be noticed that the top of the bodhi-tree above the throne on Pl. 58*d* is formed by a number of sunshades lifted on poles by worshippers — leaf-shade and sunshade having grown into each other demonstrating their basic identity — and that the Dyak-picture of the tree of life in the form of a (European) sunshade or umbrella (Pl. 58*c*) clearly shows its vegetal nature by producing leafy plumes all round. This justifies the conclusion that, whereas the shade's standard corresponds with the stem-element of the Tree, the shade itself represents either one leaf or the entire foliage of the celestial tree.[79]

[78] Cf. *Lal.* XIV, vs. 42 relating how the future Buddha in his dream sees a sunshade rise out of the ground spreading light over the three worlds.

[79] With regard to the identity of *chhattra* and foliage J. L. Moens, independently, arrived at the same conclusion. In *TBG*, 83 (1949), p. 85 he writes: "Although the sunshade and the cosmic tree are interchangeable, the Tree sometimes is still overshadowed by a *chhattra*. In this connection the statement in the Lalitavistara that the Buddha on his

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If we accept this conclusion we understand how the sunshade became pre-eminently an emblem of divine and royal dignity: not only was it the symbolic equivalent of the cosmic Tree, was it supposed to exert beneficial influences and to have a claim to divine worship, but moreover it was thought to make every person or object covered by it a 'stambha' and so to elevate it to the rank of 'the One', the divine principle inherent in the stambha.

The triśūla-chakra emblem[80]

The symbol in architectural literature called *vardhamāna, nandipada, triratna* or *triśūla-chakra* symbol, is particularly known in Buddhist art, although it is common not only to Buddhists, but also to Jainas and various Hindu-sects. In its simplest form it consists of a wheel topped by a trident — the former often varied by a lotus-rosette or a medaillon filled with concentric circles — with for third element either a couple of bands or festoons emerging on either side of the lower part of the wheel and bending downwards, or two leafy stalks or branches (Pl. 59).

This emblem is used in many ways on the monuments of Bharhut, Sānchi and Amarāvatī, often as a top for stambhas,[81] thrones and toraṇa-architraves (Pl. 59) but it also appears independently as a decorative motif of railings or as a breast-ornament.[82] We moreover find it on the Amarāvatī-reliefs as the top-piece of a tapering, flame-emitting column behind an empty throne surrounded by the faithful, or over a pair of Buddha-footsteps surrounded in the same manner,[83] Pl. 59*c*.

journeys through space is always protected by a 'tree-shade' is significant. In the Barabuḍur reliefs following after Buddha's victory over Māra the transitional stages from Bodhi-tree to a complete sunshade are clearly depicted. First the Bodhi-tree's stem disappears leaving the top to float like a cloud bank over Buddha's head. Then the foliage is changed into a cloud of opening lotus flowers. On the next relief this mass of flowers already shows a small sunshade and finally the cloud too has totally disappeared leaving the Buddha overshadowed by a normal *chhattra* from which luminous celestial ribbons hang down."

[80] The Indian name for this emblem has not been handed down. The term *vardhamāna* used on the example of Burnouf (*Lotus*, p. 127) by Senart (*Essai*, p. 23, 419) and Foucher (*AGBG*, 1, 428) relates to another emblem as was pointed out by Coomaraswamy ("Notes on Ind. coins and symbols", *OAZ*, nf., IV, 179). Neither is in his opinion the name *nandipada*, current with numismatists, to be recommended as the word *nandin* does not denote just any bull but Śiva's vehicle. Cf. Fleet, *JRAS*, 1907, p. 530.

[81] Senart, *Essai*, p. 23, 415, 419, 421.

[82] Cunningham, Bharhut, p. VI, XIII, XXIX,2, XXXII, XLIII, XLIX, L 3-6, LII. — Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, p. 114, Pl. XI, XIII, XXV 3, XL.

[83] Fergusson, *op. cit.*, Pl. LXVII, LXVIII, LXX, LXXI. — Burgess, *The Buddh. stupa of Amaravati*, Pl. XVII. — Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddh. Icon.*, Pl. 4-10.

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The question we are faced with is which part of the Tree-motif is represented by the stambha-triśūla-chakra combination. It is obvious that we are in fact dealing with such a part when we notice that the three-branched top of the Bodhi-tree on a Bharhut-relief emerges from a triśūla-chakra-shaped junction and that also the Bodhi-tree on Pl. 59*d* enclosed by a building, a so-called *bodhighara*,[84] shows the peculiarity of three branches emerging from the prongs of a triśūla placed on a wheel (visible in the lowest part of the picture).

These representations are clear enough: we find the stem-element of the Tree-motif again in the column or standard bearing the triśūla-chakra emblem, whilst the brahmamūla has been changed into the chakra, and the three main branches of the Tree into the triśūla.[85]

Since the triśūla-cakra emblem appears to belong to the vast group of representations reducible to Tree-symbolism, it is easily understood that the emblem, being pre-Buddhist, pre-Jain and pre-Hindu, became the common property of all religious sects and, more particularly, became closely related to Buddhism. As to the latter relationship we should bear in mind that as the wheel of old had been looked upon as the symbol of the Dharma preached by the Buddha and therefore one of the component parts of the emblem had been associated with one element of the Triratna, it was only natural that the other components were associated with the two remaining jewels and that the whole emblem came to be regarded as a Triratna symbol.

The triśūla-chakra motif as a wall-decoration

J. Knebel was the first to draw the attention to the fact that the ornament appearing on the walls of Central-Javanese and Khmer buildings has for chief element a triśūla. Brandes elaborated this discovery and demonstrated that the ornament in question is closely related to the triśūla-chakra emblem of the old Buddhist monuments.[86]

To his explanation I may add the following remarks.

Pl. 60*b* clearly shows the wall-ornament of the chaṇḍi Sewu to consist of a number of similar motifs, each containing a round centrepiece topped by a trident (the equivalent to the chakra and the triśūla of

[84] Coomaraswamy, "Early Ind. architecture", *Eastern Art*, II (1930), p. 225 ff.

[85] Coomaraswamy was very near the correct interpretation of the stambha topped by a triśula-chakra when he wrote (*Elements*, p. 14): "...the triśūla forms the termination of a stem or trunk which we have been able to identify with the pillar *(skambha)* that supports-apart Heaven and Earth ...*i. e.* with the axis of the Universe."

[86] "Notice sur une espèce de draperie ornamentale des anciens mon. hindous de Java central, Hommage au Congr. des Orientalistes de Hanoi, 1902, p. 7 ff.

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Bharhut and Sānchi) and being supported by a sort of pedestal composed of stylized petals and a column of small rosettes (the equivalent to the stambha-element). These motifs are joined together into one ornament through the outer prongs of each trident having been placed against a chakra and, viewed from this central point, playing a similar part as the festoons at Bharhut and Sānchi.

The further evolution of the motif can now be easily traced with the help of Pl. 60. The centre-piece becomes a rosette (*d*, chaṇḍi Meṇḍut) or a diamond on which an armed little man (yaksha) in a dancing position is placed (*e*, Loley); or the triśūla-prongs are changed into dentate leaves (*f*, the chaṇḍis Plaosan and Prambanan); in short, an unlimited number of variations of the ever-present basic form are possible whilst interesting transitions to existing decorative motifs may also occur.

Liṅga and yoni

After dealing mainly with the stambha-top and its associations with the brahmamūla, we now concentrate on the base of the stem on the assumption that this part, too, will appear to be in various ways connected with the mūla, that is in this case the padmamūla.

Before we go into the question whether the twin-emblems *liṅga* and pedestal *(yoni)* belong to the group under discussion I may make a few remarks of a morphological nature.

If we compare the round yoni on Pl. 61*a* with the Khmer relief on Pl. 61*d*, we see the same yoni to have changed into a lotus-flower-shaped mūla of the bipartite shape (see p. 119 and cf. Pl. 13, 37*a*), which leaves no doubt that the former originated from the latter. This connexion being established, there is every reason to attribute the same origin to a pedestal with a similar profile but with a square ground-plan (Pl. 61*b*). There is all the more reason to do this if we notice that the stem of the kalpataru on Pl. 22*a* has been placed in a square yoni-shaped pedestal which lends to the latter, in respect of the stem, the appearance of a padmamūla.

Having thus identified the yoni with the lotus-mūla, our next step leads inevitably in the direction of identifying the liṅga, the phallic emblem placed in the yoni, with the stem of the lotus-plant as it rises from the lotus-mūla.

That we are on the right track may be inferred in the first place from AV X 7, 41 where Skambha—another name for Stambha or cosmic pillar—is called the 'golden reed' *(vetasaṃ hiraṇyayam)* standing in the primeval waters. As *vetasa* means both 'reed' and 'phallus', the words convey that

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the cosmic reed, alias phallus, rising from the waters, is essentially one with the stambha or cosmic Tree-stem born out of the same aquatic element.

Iconography affords another confirmation of the identity of liṅga and lotus-stem.

A South-Indian relief shows graphically how the youthful Mārkaṇḍeya, who had been told that he would die before his sixteenth year, at the moment when Kāla, the god of death, assails him, seeks shelter with a Śiva-liṅga and embraces it whereupon the supreme god pops up from the liṅga and, assuming the shape of Kālahara, slays the god of death Kāla (Pl. 62*c*). Now the pedestal in which on this relief the Śiva-liṅga has been placed shows the peculiarity that at the back it has grown together with a stylized lotus-stem rising from the ground. Organically, it is part of this stem and in respect to it plays the same part as the mūla in respect of the side branch when it produces this from its base. If this means that the pedestal on the relief has been conceived as a mūla, than, consequently, the Śiva-liṅga occupies there the place, and has the function of, the stem rooted in the mūla.

This iconographic evidence may be supplemented by a similar indication taken from mythology.

In his Liṅgodbhavamūrti Śiva appears in the shape of the primeval liṅga and, rising from the underworld and cleaving the sky, penetrates into the highest heaven (Pl. 62*a*, *b*). We shall see later that in this Śiva-manifestation the primeval liṅga is one with the cosmic column and this in its turn is identical with the stem of the Tree which leads to the conclusion that liṅga and stem are interchangeable as symbolical duplicates.

This Śiva-manifestation is closely related to the liṅga-on-the-mountain motif, several variations of which are known from Javanese and Khmer archaeology. To explain this motif we should imagine the padmamūla to have assumed the form of the base of the Meru (cf. p. 96) whilst the stem-element, represented as the cosmic liṅga, stands for the top of the cosmic mountain. If an actual mountain or hill represents mount Meru, then the liṅga forms its top-piece as, for instance, is the case with the liṅga mentioned in the Changgal-inscription, or with the 'iron club, big and tall reaching up to the firmament' which according to the Tantu Panggelaran[87] was erected by bhaṭāra Guru on mount Kampud.

Where there is no natural mountain, the Meru may be represented by an artificial mountain or hill, from which originates the stepped pyramid

[87] Ed. Th. Pigeaud, p. 101. On the old-Javanese *halu* or rice pounder see *OV*, 1925, p. 47 and the literature cited there.

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on whose top the sacred liṅga is erected, the embodiment of hereditary kingship. This representation became a standing theme in the older Khmer architecture[88] but on Java, too, it was not unknown, witness the chaṇḍi Sukuh liṅga which originally probably formed the top of the main sanctuary, showing the shape of a truncated stepped pyramid.

It would lead us too far if we were to make an elaborate study of all the consequences of the above interpretation of the Śiva-liṅga. I will only dwell on one feature that may be interpreted with the aid of Tree-symbolism, and may add further confirmation to our opinion of the original vegetal nature of liṅga and pedestal.

I have in mind the enigmatical and still unexplained fact that, although it would have been natural to figure the liṅga as penetrating into the yoni —that is with its top headed downwards—when they copulate, iconographic usage knows only the representation of the liṅga inverted in respect of the yoni, that means placed in the pedestal with its head pointing upwards.

An explanation of this anomaly is not to be found in the myths and legends, which evidently were inspired by the desire of their authors to reconcile what was unintelligible to them with current ideas.[89] These traditions are certainly secondary and cannot throw light on our problem. The explanation is neither to be found in ritual, but results quite naturally from the organism of the Tree. Here the direction in which the stem, corresponding with the liṅga, grows, turns away from the root, the equivalent of the yoni. We may assume that this representation has had so strong an influence that the manner of erecting the liṅga in the yoni followed suit, and that, therefore, the phallic emblem, irrespective of the copulatory pattern, was inversely placed in the pedestal, the latter being conceived as a vulva.

[88] Cf. Ph. Stern's study "Le temple-montagne khmèr, le culte du liṅga et le Devarāja", *BEFEO*, XXXIV (1934), pp. 611 ff. The supposition that the Khmer stepped pyramid represents a mountain finds confirmation in the two Banteay Srei reliefs picturing Śiva enthroned on Mount Kailāsa which has the stepped pyramid shape (Finot, Parmentier and Goloubew, "Le temple d'Iśvarapura", *Mém. EFEO*, I, Pl. 25 and 28). It is also remarkable that in various Khmer stepped pyramids — perhaps in all — there is under the liṅga a deep pit (just as under the main image or the liṅga in Hindu-Javanese sanctuaries) which pit undoubtedly is the equivalent of the stem or stalk rising from the padmamūla's bottom and, then, piercing the mūla's body, rises above it in the form of a liṅga (cf. supra p. 96, and Pl. 16*d*).

[89] So the Devadārumahātmya in its various versions. Cf. F. D. K. Bosch, "Het Linggaheiligdom van Dinaja", *TBG*, LXIV (1924), pp. 238 ff.

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The stūpa

We now come to the stūpa. A few remarks must suffice, not because of its minor importance but, on the contrary, on account of the vast significance of the stūpa monument for religion, art, and symbolism. I only need to mention in this connection that on the Barabuḍur alone up to now some 400 scientific works and papers have been published, and that this formidable stream does not show signs of abatement but still flows on, year after year. If we add to this the literature on the Indian, Ceylonese, Nepalese, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese stūpa, then it becomes clear that the material collected has grown to the extent that we might well speak of a 'stūpa-science'. I need hardly say that I do not intend to include the whole of this 'science' in the present enquiry, but on the other hand the stūpa could not altogether be ignored in a study on Indian symbolism. The best alternative seems to be to deal only with those points that I believe to be essential for the right interpretation of stūpa-symbolism.

Our enquiry again starts from the lotus, this time, however, not from the isolated plant but from the lotus placed in the environment where religious literature and art prefer to place it, *viz.* the lotus-pond.

I need not dwell on the sanctity of this pond. In countless myths, legends and fables the scene is laid in or near a lotus-pond, and Indian iconography cannot well be imagined without the lotus-flowers on which the deities of the Hindu and Buddhist pantheon are seated, whilst these flowers in their turn are inconceivable without the pond from which they spring as from their natural abode.

The representations of these ponds reveal that the only man-made part consisted in a sort of basket-work made of branches and by way of camp-sheeting placed against the side-wall of the pond so as to prevent the earth from crumbling down. It is easily seen that this basket-work provided a good opportunity for the plants in the pond to wind through it and shoot along upwards.

Now it is well-known that this camp-sheeting is identical with the railing *(vedikā)* to be found on reliefs and round the actual stūpas and other chaityas. This vedikā originally was nothing else but a wooden fence consisting of a plinth *(ālambana)*, uprights *(stambha)* with lateral sockets for the reception of the horizontal 'needles' *(sūchi)*, and a coping *(ushṇīsha)*. Foucher when dealing with the Gandhāra-relief showing the lotus-pond inhabited by the nāga Kālika said in connection with this railing: "... la pièce d'eau où vit le Nāga sera entourée d'une balustrade de pierre, pareille à celle dont l'Inde avait coutume d'environner, aussi bien

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dans la réalité que sur les images, non seulement les *stūpa*, mais encore tous les *caitya* ou objets de culte, qu'il s'agît d'un édifice, d'un arbre ou d'un étang sacrés."[90]

It being established that the stone-railing originated from a wooden fence identical with the camp-sheeting of the pond, there is still another feature about this correspondence between the railing and the sheeting: just as with the latter the basket-work is overgrown with lotus-vegetation, so the former shows the same vegetation, on the understanding that here the lotus through an abundance of elegant variations and stylizations provided the motifs for the copings, the stambhas with their medaillons, and all the further parts of the railing suitable for ornamentation. So it seems not too bold to suppose that this ornament of lotus-motifs was derived from the lotus-vegetation of the camp-sheeting.

However this may be, the identification of camp-sheeting and railing provides a suitable starting-point for a further comparison of the lotus-pond with a stūpa-complex of the Sānchi-type.

For this purpose we now take before us the interesting picture on Pl. 54*c* taken from the Picture Section of the Chinese Tripiṭaka. We notice here in perspective a square lotus-pond whose vertical sides, appearing in a level position in the picture, at regular intervals are buttressed by branches or beams presented in the picture by small parallel strokes. On the corners of the square the Guardians of the Quarters (Lokapālas) are posted with their attendants and in full attire, while from the centre of the pond rises the Cosmic Tree, in the shape of a tall lotus-plant, with on its summit the Wheel of the Law. The latter particulars indicate that we have to transport ourselves mentally to a macrocosmic environment in which the lotus-plant represents the Mahāmeru, the lotus-pond the World Ocean and the sheeting the mountain-range shutting in that ocean. Of greater importance, however, than this parallel is the most essential feature in the Chinese picture: the presence of the camp-sheeting, the element which, as we noticed just now, corresponds with the stūpa-railing. As this camp-sheeting is part of the pond in the same manner as the railing is part of the stūpa-complex, we may take one further step by comparing the remaining parts of both complexes as

[90] Foucher, *AGBG*, I, p. 387, figs. 194-196. In my opinion Foucher's interpretation of these pictures is not quite correct. If, as the artists want us to believe, the lotus pond actually was a sort of square basin placed on the ground and having side walls made of stone bars and cross bars, the water obviously would have poured out through the apertures between the bars. A better conjecture is that the pond was sunk in the ground, its sides being supported by means of wattle-work consisting of twigs or branches and showing the rough outline of the balustrade in the relief pictures.

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well. In the first place, the expanse of water betweeen the lotus and the sheeting corresponds with the processional path between the stūpa-structure and the railing, and secondly the objects which in both complexes occupy the central place and are the main objects of worship may be considered for identification. These objects are: the cosmic lotus-plant in the case of the pond and the stūpa-structure in the case of the stūpa-complex.

The latter point deserves further consideration.

I shall not dwell on the question where or when the stūpa first appeared and what its original meaning was. On the one hand, it is very doubtful whether, at its first appearance as a prehistoric monument[91], the stūpa-tumulus had any connection with Cosmic Tree symbolism, on the other hand, there can be no doubt that since its introduction by Buddhism and Jainism the stūpa was strongly influenced by this symbolism and in its further development shows equally distinct traces of this influence.

In the main there are four parts that the Tree-organism and the stūpa-structure have in common, providing the chief elements for their comparison and identification. These are: 1) the padmamūla and the corresponding dome-shaped stūpa-body *(aṇḍa* or *garbha)*; 2) the stem and the corresponding central post *(yūpa)*, the former continuing in 3) the central branch of the Cosmic Tree, the latter in the pinnacle *(yashṭi)*, and 4) the roof of the tree's foliage corresponding with the sun-shade *(chhattra)* or the series of sun-shades *(chhattrāvali)* surmounting the stūpa.[92]

Before dealing with the relation between these four parts, I call the reader's attention to a piece of Balinese sculpture which, though not so very ancient (10th century), shows, more clearly perhaps than any other work, the close affinity between the stūpa and the Tree. It is a bas-relief discovered near the dessa Bedulu in southern Bali by the late Dr. Stutterheim.[93] In its original state — before it fell to earth — it was carved out in the rock and showed a shallow niche, about seven meters wide, containing

[91] For a discussion of these prehistoric tumuli see Bloch, *ASI-AR*, 1926-1927, pp. 123 ff. and pl. XL; Paranavitana, "The Stūpa in Ceylon", *Mem. A.S. Ceylon*, V (1947), p. 38; Mus, "Barabuḍur", *BEFEO*, XXXIII (1933), pp. 577 ff. His opinion on the relation between tumulus and stūpa is summarized as follows: "Le tumulus ne sera, à nos yeux, qu'un prédécesseur très lointain du stūpa... Nous ne nierons pas les relations du stūpa et du tumulus, mais nous verrons s'en réduire beaucoup l'importance, la rigueur et le caractère immédiat, sinon l'intérêt" (*op. cit.*, p. 578).

[92] In his book on the evolution of the stūpa Combaz already identified the yashṭi with the celestial tree: "L'évolution du stūpa en Asie", *Mél. chin. et bouddh.*, II (1932-1933), pp. 199, 202, 252, 298. See also Mus, *op. cit.*, *BEFEO*, XXXII, pp. 385 ff. and XXXIII, pp. 763 ff. For the identification of the roof of foliage of the celestial tree with the chhattra see supra p. 161.

[93] *Djâwâ*, XVI (1936), p. 77.

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three stūpas. "Each of them consisted of a short pillar, about one meter high, bearing a lotus-cushion on which a slightly flattened spherical stūpa was placed. From the latter rose a number of sunshades, first growing in size and then getting smaller, the whole topped by a jewel. The centre-stūpa showed on either side of the sphere protuberances curving upwards like the branches of a candelabrum. Each one supported a minute lotus cushion bearing an equally dimunitive stūpa provided with a number of sunshades just like the other stūpas. The entire centre-piece must have had the appearance of a tree with two side-branches curving upwards beside the main stem placed between two other trees, or, if the pyramids of sunshades are compared with candles, of a three-armed candelabrum placed between two ordinary candelabra".

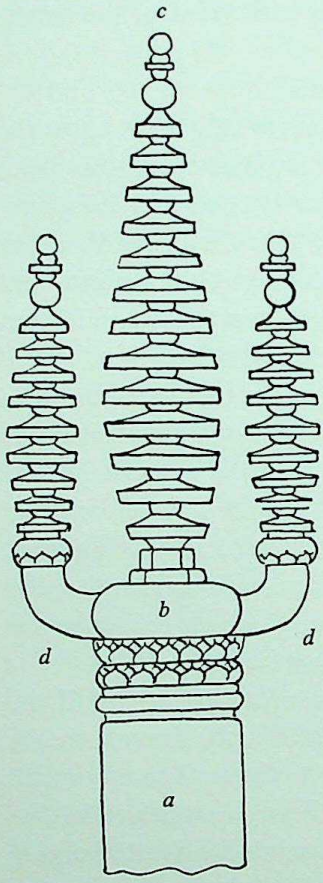

Fig. 19

The fact that Stutterheim in this description called the stūpa a tree and at the same time compared it with a candelabrum is not surprising if we remember that the candelabrum-shaped lamp is one of the most characteristic manifestations of the Cosmic Tree (cf. p. 121 and Pl. 38*a*). As fig. 19 speaks for itself I only have to mention that *a* indicates the stambha, *b* the brahmamūla, and *c* and *d* respectively the middle and side-branches.

We now return to the above identification of the four main elements of the stūpa: aṇḍa, yūpa, yashṭi, and chhattra, with the four chief elements of the Tree-organism: the padmamūla, the stem, the middle branch and the roof of foliage of the celestial Tree. A seeming contradiction in this identification lies in the fact that the four component parts of the stūpa and of the Tree present widely differing proportions. With the former the dome-shaped part usually occupies such a dominant position as compared with the other parts that the quite differently proportioned parts of the Tree scheme hardly seem to offer a parallel. I commented on this circumstance before (p. 103) when it was pointed out that Indian symbolism does not hesitate to accentuate in turn various parts of the Basic Form, emphasizing

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and enlarging now the stem, now the top or the root with its shoots, and reducing the other parts proportionally, or even discarding them altogether.

This applies particularly to the stūpa. In the formation of this monument usually one part has been enlarged to the extent that the stūpa-types so made seem to prevent any comparison with the Tree-organism. Such is the case not only with the Sānchi-type and its excessively enlarged aṇḍa but also when the yashṭi has extended disproportionally and the single chhattra becomes a tall pyramid of sun-shades, (Pl. 63) the *chhattrāvali*, with the result that the aṇḍa-element dwindles into insignificance or even into nothingness.[94]

A curious example of the latter is found in Mahāvaṃsa XXV, 1 and XXVI, 9 ff. relating how king Duṭṭhagāmaṇi of Ceylon had a relic put in his ceremonial lance and only later, as an afterthought, had a stūpa-shaped structure built round this spindle.[95] This case shows that not only was the yūpa-yashṭi element sufficient for forming a relic-stūpa but also that for the making of this monument the aṇḍa-element was of secondary importance and could even be dispensed with.

Another example of the same peculiarity is afforded by the Hindu-Javanese type of stūpa having the yashṭi and chhattrāvali as chief element. It consists of a lotus-cushion with a tall mast bearing a number of sun-shades, first growing, then diminishing in size, whilst between the cushion and the mast sometimes a small globe is found, the remainder of the actual stūpa-body which often may be absent altogether.[96] This is another instance of the yashṭi and chhattrāvali having been enlarged at the expense of the aṇḍa-element.

Finally, we have the stūpa at Peshawar erected by king Kanishka which has the often-mentioned peculiarity that the aspect of the structure, although called a stūpa, has nothing in common with the classical stūpa-

[94] Mus rightly emphasized the great importance of the axial pillar (*BEFEO*, XXXII, pp. 385 ff.) but in my opinion went too far in declaring: "Dès à présent, se confirme le rôle de premier plan que joue le pilier axial dans la contexture du stūpa. Ce n'est pas seulement qu'il en marque le milieu, qu'il en jaillisse et le domine sous la forme d'une hampe chargée d'ombrelles: la bâtisse entière tourne et se referme autour de lui, s'explique par lui et n'en est, en un mot, que l'enveloppe." The other stūpa elements, the aṇḍa, and the chhattrāvali, are at least as important as the yūpa. It only depends on the question which of the three dominates at a certain moment.

[95] Cf. the story of Rudrāyaṇa relating that Mahākātyāyana presented his mother with his staff and that over this a stūpa was built. (Krom, *Barabuḍur*, I, 1,285).

[96] This is particularly the case with the stūpa enclosed in the little niche in the hairdress of the Hindu-Javanese Maitreya images. Cf. also the beautiful Maitreya bronze from Palembang, Southern Sumatra, F. M. Schnitger, *The Archaeology of Hindoo Sumatra*, 1937, pl. VIII.

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monument. "It consisted", so Coomaraswamy summarizes the various descriptions,[97] "of a basement in five stages (150 feet), a superstructure ('stūpa') of carved wood in thirteen stories (400 feet), surmounted by an iron column with from thirteen to twenty-five gilt copper umbrellas making a total height of 638 feet." Although this description is not quite intelligible, it may be assumed that, just as in the case of the later Chinese and Japanese pagodes built after the model of the Kanishka stūpa, the main element of the structure was the pivot consisting of a tall (wooden?) mast or yūpa continuing in the iron column or yashṭi. So in this world-famous structure the yūpa-yashṭi element again dominates to the point of eliminating the stūpa proper.

Beside these examples of emphasizing one element at the expense of the others, there are the stūpa-types with more normal proportions. Of particular interest are the types revealing a true understanding of the original meaning of the stem-element in its relation to the padmamūla-element. In this connection I may remind the reader that the lotus-root is supposed to spring from the padmamūla-base, then to pierce the mūla-body, and finally to rise high above it (Pl. 16*d*), a characteristic that was followed in the building of the stūpa-sanctuary. This is borne out by the often-recorded fact[98] that with many stūpas the yūpa is deeply implanted in the interior of the stūpa-body, sometimes even rests on the base of this body, then pierces the body and finally, as a yashṭi, rises high above it. As there was no constructional necessity for giving the yūpa such a deep foundation, it can only have been symbolical reasons that urged the builders to this design, *viz.* the necessity of making the stūpa monument resembling as near as possible the image of the Tree-organism.

So far we only discussed the various forms of the stūpa,[99] but the significance of this structure as it may be inferred from Tree-symbolism is no less important.

The fact that the stūpa appeared as the Cosmic Tree transposed into symbolic forms, composed of the same elements and virtually identical with it, explains why, as is shown in the texts ,the stūpa, just like the bodhi-tree, is the object of worship for the faithful on its own accord whether or

[97] *Hist. of Ind. and Indon. Art.*, p. 53. For the various descriptions of the Kanishka stūpa by Chinese pilgrims see Chavannes, "Voyage de Song Yun", *BEFEO*, III, (1903), pp. 420 ff.

[98] Mus, *BEFEO*, XXXII, p. 385 ff.; Combaz, *op. cit.*, pp. 198, 202; Paranavitana, *op. cit.*, p. 35 ff.

[99] The most complete survey of the multitudinous forms assumed by the stūpa in its evolution throughout Asia is to be found in Combaz' work mentioned above. In this respect the many pictures of stūpa buildings on the Barabuḍur reliefs are also of great interest. Van Erp, *Barabuḍur*, II, ch. V and ch. III with fig. 44-46.

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not a relic has been placed in its interior. The Saddharmapuṇḍarīka is clear on this subject when it says: "Wherever the doctrine is preached, recorded, read or recited stūpas should be erected for the Tathāgata as large and costly as possible but it is not necessary to put relics in them." And Foucher says[100]: "Rien ne serait plus faux que de prétendre que le stūpa n'était pour les Bouddhistes qu'un monument funéraire: nous avons de source certaine qu'il avait, à leurs yeux, une valeur religieuse indépendante des reliques qu'il pouvait, ou non, contenir." Or in the terse words of Mus: "Le dépot [des reliques] couronne le symbolisme [du stūpa], il ne le crée pas."[101]

It should also be noticed that the identity of stūpa and bodhi-tree leads to similar ways of worship and decoration of both sacred objects. Both are surrounded by the vedikā and round them the ceremonial pradakshiṇa takes place including the task — in the words of Saddharmapuṇḍarīka X — of worshipping the stūpa (and we may add: the bodhi-tree) with all sorts of flowers, incense, scents, garlands, ointments, perfumed powders, clothes, sunshades, bunting, standards, big and small clocks, together with song and dance.

But this is not all. The close affinity between stūpa and Tree has deeper roots than are revealed by worship and decoration. As the dome-shaped stūpa-body is identical with the padmamūla both in shape and in nature, it is *in symbolicis* obvious that all the properties of the root of the Cosmic Tree have been transferred to this body, particularly the golden colour. Gold is the essence of Hiraṇyagarbha, and on the other hand we read again and again about stūpas that spread a golden sheen or by their founders or donors have been overlaid with golden or gilded sheets or covered with a yellow or saffron-coloured plaster. This indicates that generally the golden colour was regarded as the most appropriate for the stūpa.[102]

More important even than this similarity in colour are the supposed contents of both padmamūla and stūpa, *viz.* the amṛita. Just as the padmamūla is the receptacle for the elixir of life, so the stūpa is supposed to contain this valuable liquid in its interior. Hence the fact that each stūpa is supposed to be guarded by one or more yakshas,[103] these being

[100] *AGBG*, I, p. 52.
[101] *BEFEO*, XXXIII, p. 615.
[102] Coedès, "Documents sur l'hist. politique et religieuse du Laos occidental", *BEFEO*, XXV (1925), pp. 33, 84, 86, 103, 107, 121, 132. Cf. the well-known narrative by Hiuen tsiang of the foundation of the 'saffron stūpa' to the north-west of Bodh Gaya, *beal*, *Sī-yū-ki*, p. 61; Mus, *op. cit.*, *BEFEO*, XXXII, p. 371.
[103] Mus, *op. cit.*, *Introd.*, p. 245.

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the tree-spirits who, as we shall see presently, are specially charged with guarding valuables, particularly the most valuable of all, the amṛita. It also explains why the stūpa is credited with all the miraculous qualities inherent in the amṛita, like the power to radiate a dazzling light and so to function as a 'lighthouse of the Good Law',[104] also the power to bestow fertility and to protect the lives of all creatures from infirmity, old age, and death.[105]

Equally important for stūpa-symbolism is the identification of the lotus-root as the exponent of the aquatic element with the Sacred Word, revealed wisdom (see p. 53), which in Brahmanism is personified in Vāch, the female counterpart of the creative element, and later appears as Sarasvatī, spouse of the god Brahmā and goddess of wisdom and music, whilst in Buddhism she is known as Prajñā, the doctrine preached by the Buddha.

Now the identity of the stūpa with the padmamūla, and of the latter with vāch in the meaning of 'word', 'sound', 'music', 'doctrine preached by the Buddha', provides us with an explanation of notions in stūpa-symbolism which, though widely divergent and seemingly unrelated, are parts of one coherent whole. To these belong the tales about famous stūpas which are said to emit sweet music from the interior of their domes during the night,[106] a feature that is easily explained by the identity between stūpa, padmamūla, vāch, and Sarasvatī.

To the same category of ideas belongs the strong influence which stūpa and bell *(ghaṇṭā)* had on each other. This influence may be inferred from the fact that in Hindu-Javanese art and elsewhere the stūpa-body protrudes at the base, which gives it a bell-shape, while on the other hand the decoration of the bell with its richly decorated middle band and garlands hanging from it are obviously borrowed from stūpa decoration. What this close affinity between ganṭhā and stūpa has meant to the faithful is obvious: they must have imagined that just as the bell emits its sound that is widely heard, so from the interior of the stūpa-dome an uninterrupted stream of Vāch is produced, the Sacred Word, the doctrine preached by the Buddha, spreading to the far corners of the earth for the salvation of all creatures.[107]

It goes without saying that the above two sources from which we have drawn: the identity between the stūpa and the amṛita with its derivations,

[104] "Leuchtturm des Weltgesetzes", as it was styled by J. J. M. de Groot (*Der Thupa, Abh. d. preuss. Ak. d. Wiss.*, 1919, passim).
[105] De Groot, *op. cit.*, passim; Mus, *op. cit.*, *BEFEO*, XXXIII, p. 613.
[106] Mus, *op. cit.*, *BEFEO*, XXXIII, p. 613.
[107] De Groot, *op. cit.*, passim.

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and that between the stūpa and Vāch with its corresponding notions, gave rise to a large number of novel comparisons and identifications which, now moving parallelly, now interlinking or mingling freely, have produced most fanciful and intricate complexes of representations which have found their reflex in literature and art. It would be attractive to go deeper into this challenging subject further but we must leave this to future investigation.

We now return to our starting-point, the lotus-pond, to find out what a comparison of this chaitya with the other far more interesting chaitya, the stūpa, has to tell us.

When we take once more the Chinese picture on fig. 54*c* before us, it is this naively executed representation of what the artist saw before him as a mighty and mysterious event that will reveal to us how we should appreciate a stūpa structure of the Sānchi type as a mighty complex of symbols.

We shall find in this picture three parallel series each on its own level, the first one to be found in living nature, the second projected in the macrocosm, and the last one manifest in architectural art.

The first series leads us to the lotus-pond that is enclosed by a fence made of branches and overgrown by flowering lotus-plants, and in which all vegetal life is centred in the one lotus rising from the centre of the pond and monopolizing the attention.

The artist, however, saw to it that we should not misinterpret this picture. By adding some striking particulars — the Wheel of the Law and the Guardians of the Quarters — he made it clear, as we saw before, that what seems a terrestrial situation actually belongs to a higher level, the cosmic level, which makes the fence a chakravāla, lends to the pond the dimensions of the world-ocean, and to the lotus the character of the cosmic mountain, the Mahāmeru.

Finally, there is the third level, the level of art, on which both the display of the terrestrial lotus-plant and its reflection in the macrocosm are transported by art in a series of striking symbols and are given a deeply religious and aesthetic significance. In the first place, in the hands of the artist the simple fence becomes the monumental vedikā made of stone, but in this form still decorated with lotus-motifs and so reminiscent of the wooden, lotus-overgrown fence from which it originated. Secondly, the unruffled expanse of the pond, when transferred to the architectural plane, becomes the smooth path for the pilgrim performing the ceremonial pradakshiṇa round the sanctuary. And lastly, the highest expression of symbolism is reached in the transformation of the cosmic

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lotus into the stūpa.[108] As we saw before, this deeper meaning is withdrawn from view by a wealth of ornamentation and by a disproportion of the component parts of the monument as compared with the parts of the plant, with the result that the uninitiated spectator is apt to regard the architect's work as an end in itself having no other meaning than is expressed by the monument itself.

If I am not mistaken, the above remarks apply not only to the stūpa-complex but in general to every temple-complex consisting of a main building with secondary buildings enclosed by a wall as it is often found on Java. Seen symbolically, this complex represents a cosmic lotus-pond having the main temple for the central lotus (= Mahāmeru), the secondary buildings for the surrounding lotus-vegetation (= the mountain tops encircling the Meru), the temple-square for the pond (=the world-ocean), and the wall for the fence of the pond (= chakravāla).

Here again new vistas are opened but we cannot dwell on these as our object was confined to indicating the main lines along which stūpa-symbolism developed.

3. THE STEM IN ITS NATURAL STATE

An East Javanese sculpture

In the representations to be discussed now the stem, and mostly also the top of the Tree, appear in their natural state or have only been slightly altered.

First of all we examine a piece of sculpture which — although not belonging to this class on account of the stem not being the natural one — presents so clear and convincing a picture of the superposition of, and the contrast between, the two cosmic trees that it is well worth our attention.

The piece on Pl. 65*a*, originating from the Blitar region and dating from the East Javanese period, is composed of a rectangular back slab with an arched brace-shaped upper edge, and a double lotus-cushion on which the object of worship is placed. The latter is not the image of a god but an oval water-vessel round whose belly an ascete's chain has been wound whilst from the neck emerge three lotus-stalks, the central one being topped by an open lotus-flower, and the two other ones ending in a lotus-leaf. From the belly of the vessel, too, emerge two stalks topped by

[108] This interpretation, if correct, implies that the toraṇas belonging to the stūpa of the Sānchi type should be taken symbolically as the wooden gateways placed crosswise in the sides of the lotus pond's enclosure giving access to it, its posts carrying lotus creepers in the same manner as the campshedding. If such is the case, the lotus ornament of the toraṇas obviously would permit an interpretation similar to that of the vedikā.

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leaves together with a number of shoots ending in buds and winding round the posts of an arch to be mentioned hereafter.

Another configuration evolves from the top of the back-slab where a one-eyed monster-head is placed. From this point two flat posts, grooved lengthwise, bend downwards in the shape of a heart, each one ending in the upper half of a deer's body. These animals have long upright horns on the head and place one foreleg on one of the shoots emerging on the right and left from the kumbha's belly.

Some light is thrown on the meaning of this quaint piece if we notice that it consists of two parts which develop contrariwise and therefore should be read accordingly. The first one starts from the top-piece and represents the kāla-mṛiga-toraṇa in a form not differing from the East Javanese type which we discussed before (p. 130), whereas the other one originates in the kumbha with its vegetation.

So we have before us the two cosmic trees, fig-tree and lotus-plant, growing against each other, respectively from the heaven and from the earth, the former symbolized by the kāla-mṛiga-toraṇa motif, the latter by the kumbha and lotus-vegetation.

But this is not the whole of the symbolic meaning of the sculpture. It expresses in a striking manner the idea that both the primeval forces in nature, creative breath and primeval waters, Agni and Soma, male and female element, enter into each other, and are constantly dependent on and linked to each other, this being visualized by representing the lotus-plant and the celestial tree entwining each other, the former embracing with its shoots the branches of the celestial tree, the latter clasping the lotus-shoots by means of the deer-figures.

We notice, in conclusion, that the fact that the sculpture has been placed on a lotus-cushion and so occupies the place reserved elsewhere for the image of a god, indicates that the whole of the sculpture, and particularly the full water-vessel, has a similar religious meaning as the image elsewhere. We shall revert to this in our final discussion when the place of Tree-symbolism in the religious life of the Indian will be examined.

A decorative motif of the chaṇḍi Pringapus

The same theme as represented in the above piece, though greatly differing in the execution, is to be found as a decorative motif on one of the walls of the Central-Javanese chaṇḍi Pringapus (Pl. 65*b*).

This motif consists of two almost similar heart-shaped figures placed atop of each other, and is supposed to represent respectively the terrestrial and the celestial tree. The centre of the lower half shows a jewel on a lotus,

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the well-known substitute of the bipartite padmamūla (p. 120) from which emerges a luxuriant ornament of leaves and stalks filling the entire space inside a heart-shaped frame. This frame consists of two stalks, the side-branches of our Basic Form, rising from the padmamūla's bottom and meeting at the top of the heart after turning a wide curve. On this top rests the jewel-shaped brahmamūla of the celestial tree, and from it, just as in the lower half, two stalks emerge, the side-branches of the Basic Form, and some more vegetation stylized into an ornament.

We notice that in the lower half of the figure the actual stem-element of the Tree-motif is absent, unless the bundle of shoots planted on the top of the jewel, narrow at the beginning and gradually widening out, is meant to serve this purpose.

A bronze hanging-lamp

In view of the point just raised, the absence of the stem-element, it is worthwhile to draw an analogy between the lower half of the Pringapus-ornament and the East-Javanese bronze hanging-lamp on Pl. 65*c*. The resemblance is striking, as in the case of the lamp we also find emerging from the base of a bipartite padmamūla two stems curving upwards in the shape of a heart, but here the ends, which at Pringapus remain separate, meet in one point enclosed by, and serving as a support for, a brahmamūla the top-half of which unfortunately has broken off.

Although the stem-element is here missing, it certainly was present when the object served a religious purpose, for every time the lamp was lit an equivalent of the Tree-stem, on the place where it was meant to be present, was produced in the form of the flame fed by and rising above the oil-tank that once must have been placed on the round upper part of the mūla. In Hindu-Javanese eyes this flame undoubtedly presented a great and powerful emblem. It represented the column of fire and light in which the unmanifested Brahman appears as Agni, the same Agni who is said to support the firmament by his pillar of flame or smoke (RV, III 5, 10), who elsewhere is compared with a pillar essentially one with the divine principle (RV IV, 5, 1) and who also is frequently identified with the cosmic tree with a thousand branches (RV VI, 3, 1; VIII, 19, 33; IX,5, 10).

The gunungan[109]

The next object claiming our attention is the so-called *gunungan* ('mountain') or *kekayon* ('tree'), *i.e.* the finely carved piece of leather

[109] W. F. Stutterheim, "Oost-Java en de Hemelberg" (East Java and the Mountain of Heaven), *Djâwâ*, 1926, pp. 333 ff.; "The meaning of the Hindu-Jav. Caṇḍi", *JAOS*

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which at the beginning and at the end of each part of the performance of the Javanese shadow-play is placed in front of the screen between the two groups of puppets. It has the shape of a leave and is decorated with the design of a big tree, populated by birds and other animals, and standing on a mountain or some other kind of elevation which has taken its place (Pl. 66-69).

It has long been known that this gunungan is closely related to the kalpataru, to the celestial tree, and other miraculous trees, and in this respect our examination will not yield fresh aspects. But it will help our understanding of this still mysterious figure if we can demonstrate that the various types of gunungan, though unlike in many respects, may be reduced to one design, the design of our Basic Form, and so may be embodied in the vast group of representations of Indian origin based on this form. In doing so we shall be surprised to find not only that the ancient Tree-motif has been miraculously maintained in the still living wayang tradition but also that this tradition has managed to preserve older and more original features than any other representations of miraculous trees. This does not mean that every element of gunungan symbolism should be ripe for an interpretation just by comparing it with our Basic Form, but although some questions will remain unanswered the fact remains that the main features of the wayang-figure we have in view may find an explanation when seen from the angle of the Basic Form.

As both names for the wayang figure, *gunungan* 'mountain' and *kekayon* 'tree', indicate, it consists of two parts each of which may give it its name, *viz.* a mountain part and a tree part. If we first examine the mountain part, we find that in the case of the Javanese gunungans — the Balinese specimens are different in this respect — it may be reduced to the bipartite, lotus-shaped variety of the padmamūla we met before (p. 120). It was then pointed out that either the upper and the lower half independently change into a symbol, or that the whole mūla is replaced by a morphologically equivalent symbol.

51, p. 132ff.; W. Aichele, Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de wenschboom" (Contribution to the history of the wishing tree), *Djâwâ*, 1928, p. 18 ff.; W. H. Rassers, "Over den oorsprong van het Jav. toneel" (On the origin of the Jav. theatre), *BKI*, 1931, p. 398 ff; K. A. H. Hidding, "De beteekenis van de kekajon" (the significance of the k.), *TBG*, 1931, p. 623 ff.; H. Bergema, *De Boom des Levens in schrift en historie* (The Tree of Life in Holy Writ and history), 1938.

The Indian equivalent of the kekayon is the *Indradhvaja* (supra p. 152) called *jarjara* in this particular function. During the prelude to the dramatic play it was placed on the stage and worshipped, thus making the stage a sacred world, F. B. J. Kuiper, *BKI*, 107, p. 68. On the *jarjara* cf. also J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie*, III, p. 51 and J. Gonda, "Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung und Wesen des Indischen Dramas", *AO*, XIX (1943), pp. 367 ff.

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The latter is the case with the gunungans pictured on Pls. 66*a*, 67*b* and showing the entire padmamūla having been replaced by a symbol, *viz.* an hourglass-shaped pedestal strongly resembling the yoni, the padmamūla substitute we have already met (p. 164, Pl. 61). On the other hand, the pictures on Pl. 66*b*, 67*a* show the upper and the lower half of the mūla each going its own way. The lower half of both figures represents a mountain — in the first case consisting of one jewel-shaped figure, in the other of five of such figures — whilst Pl. 67*a* shows the upper part having been transformed into an inverted stepped pyramid, and in Pl. 66*b* the same part has changed into the well-known figure of the kumbha filled with water or amṛita.

In these pictures we easily recognize the bipartite Basic Form just mentioned, but this is not the case, or only slightly so, with the small building on Pl. 68*a*, *b* that, in spite of its humble aspect, has been thought worthy of filling with numerous gunungans the place of the mountain part. It may be true that the shape of this building, through its projecting base and eaves, somewhat recalls the hourglass, but the resemblance is not striking enough to serve as an intermediary in a comparison with the padmamūla. So this intermediary must be found elsewhere, and we should look for it not in the shape but in the meaning of the building (p. 100).

In this connection it should be noted that both doors, which usually fill such a disproportionally prominent place in the front of the little house, are always pictured as shut. It is also remarkable that the little monument, in this way already protected from intruders, has a pair of armed yakshas posted on either side as guardians. All these precautions against violence remind us of the passage AV, X 2, 31, quoted before, where the padmamūla is mentioned and glorified as Brahman's stronghold filled with amṛita, the impregnable citadel *(pūr ayodhyā)*, ablaze with light, wrapped in glory, surrounded on all sides by walls and gates.

The point of resemblance, then, must be that both the padmamūla and the building are considered to be the well-guarded storehouse for the amṛita, the most precious of all treasures,[110] whilst the two guardians no doubt represent the yakshas or tree spirits well-known in narrative literature, whose duty it is to guard treasures, particularly the Meru or the elixir of life.[111]

[110] One of the obelisk-shaped pillars at chaṇḍi Sukuh on the slope of the Lawu mountain in Central Java and dating from the 15th century shows a picture of Garuḍa capturing the amṛita. The house in which the elixir is stored has almost the same shape as the gunungan-building discussed here.

[111] The Javanese descriptions of pleasure-grounds and their Meru-like buildings often mention these demoniacal gate-keepers, so the *Arjuna Sasrabahu* (transl. by J. Kats,

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Of the component parts of the gunungan appearing more or less regularly in conjunction with the mountain part I mention the pair of huge wings which often flank the upper half (Pl. 66-68).[112]

On a former occasion — *Djåwå*, VI (1926), p. 345 — I have tried to explain these strange appendices by assuming that they originated in the well-known legend relating how the mountains first flew through space till the god Indra stripped them of their wings making them immobile *(achala)* and established them on the earth (Rām. V 1). This would imply that the wings of the one symbol (the mountain) had passed on to the other symbols (pedestal, pyramid or kumbha). Though this may not be altogether inconceivable, I am now inclined to believe that we are dealing here, as in so many similar cases, with the transformation of a vegetal basic form. If we look once more at the kumbha picture on Pl. 28*c* we notice on either side of the neck a stylized (lotus) leaf showing distinctly the wing-shape, and a little higher up this is repeated with the two leaves on either side of the central stem. There is an even more convincing example of the transition from plant to wing to be found in the gunungan-like gate-house on a relief at the Seṇḍang-duwur mosque in the Lamongan district (Pl. 69*c*). We find here on either side a bundle of leaf-like sprouts developing into a pair of strong wings.[113] As in respect of the gateway these wings occupy the same place as the wings of the gunungan, the vegetal origin of the last set of accessory parts has considerably gained in probability.[114]

In the second place, we note the two nāgas which, when present, always emerge from the top-half of the symbol replacing the padmamūla (Pl. 66*a*, *b*; 67*a*). Some of these nāgas are big-sized and hang down in an elegant curve, others are smaller and have raised their crowned heads, whilst others again emerge from the bottom of the kumbha and form

Jav. Tooneel, p. 24), *Nawaruci* (transl. by Prijohoetomo, p. 96) and *Damar Wulan* (transl. by K. A. H. Hidding, *TBG*, 1931, p. 643).

[112] Cf. *KSS*, I, 220: "What is this gigantic object visible far away in the sea looking like a big hill and having wings? Brahman, that is a waringin."

[113] As to the further analysis of this relief, I believe the central part above the ground to present a padmamūla of the lotus-flowertype stretched out broadwise. On either side emerge the bundles of sprouts above-mentioned and in the centre a third bundle representing the stem of the cosmic tree. These bundles, by their inward bent tops, support the brahmamūla in the shape of a stylized monster-head the root of whose nose, as usually, bears the five-branched celestial tree.

[114] I believe, therefore, the traditional explanations of the wings to be only secondary, *e.g.* the legend of the flying mountains mentioned before, and the story in the *Arjuna Sasrabahu* (J. Kats, *Het Jav. Tooneel*, p. 24) alleging the wings to be those of a giant eagle whose body is represented by the gateway.

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the outline of a jewel-shaped figure representing the lower half of the mountain-part.

For the meaning of these nāgas I may refer to my former remarks on this subject. It needs no further comment that with the gunungan, just as in the cases mentioned on p. 132 ff., they appear as the symbolical substitutes of the two side-branches sprouting from either side of the padmamūla.

The second main part of the gunungan, the tree part, occurs in two types. The first one, which is the most frequent with the Balinese gunungans, does not show the brahmamūla as a separate organ (Pl. 69*a*) and, therefore, is evidently intended to present the Tree of the non-composite type (p. 83), whereas the other type does have this organ or a symbolic substitute of it, and so presents the Tree as produced by the superposition of the celestial tree upon the terrestrial tree. We also note that, whereas the component elements of the mountain part may change into various symbols, the tree part always appears in its natural state, with the exception of the brahmamūla which invariably shows the figure of the vanaspati-monster-head (Pl. 66, 67, 68*a*), or of the antefix which we discussed when dealing with the Hindu-Javanese wishing-tree (Pl. 68*b*).

When after these general remarks we examine the tree part of the gunungan we find that the specimen on Pl. 67*b* has preserved the oldest and most original representation. Not only has the vanaspati-head been put in the right place, *i.e.* the spot where the stem splits into two and which in the Central-Javanese kalpatarus is occupied by the antefix-shaped brahmamūla, but also the branches show the sharp downward curve which is characteristic for the celestial banyan-tree. Furthermore, the number of the main branches being four is reminiscent of a very ancient Indian tradition. These branches, it is true, should sprout from one point and be directed to the four corners of the compass — and not, as here, be placed one pair atop of the other — but it is easily seen that if tradition required these four branches they could not have been put in the flat plane in any other way than was done in this gunungan.

The other gunungan, pictured on Pl. 66-68, resemble the standard-specimen in some respects (see the downward bend of the four branches on Pl. 66*a*), but there are also differences (*e.g.* the shifting upwards of the monster-head on Pl. 67*c* and 68*a*, and the indistinct branches on Pl. 68*c*).

Many gunungans show leaves and branches densely populated with birds and other animals. It does not seem likely that specific animals are meant, considering the fact that the cosmic Tree is also the Tree of Life, which nourishes and sustains all creatures indiscriminately, as Śankara

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has it in his commentary on Kāṭh. Up. VI, 1 and Bhag. Gītā XV 1-3: "Its downward-growing branches are the worlds where all creatures find their subsistence, resounding with the cries of all, gods or men, animals or spirits, having their nests in its branches."

An exception is to be made for the two feline animals which often, though not invariably, are placed on either side of the stem, under the lowermost pair of branches, on the upper half of the mountain part or of its symbolical substitute (Pl. 66, 67). The fact that these animals have been given a bigger size than the other quadrupeds in the celestial tree suggests that they represent specific animals. The question then arises what animals they are. Stutterheim made useful suggestions in this context by pointing out that these animals occur in nearly all periods of Hindu-Javanese art, both on the chaṇḍi Prambanan and on the buildings of the most recent Majapahit period.[115] Now they appear as hares or rabbits, now they resemble cats or have a human likeness, but nearly always they are characterized by long, tapering ears. We also note that these mysterious beings generally have the function that elsewhere is performed by the horse, so when they draw the chariot of the sun-god, moreover, that they are often placed in pairs under or near a throne, or on either side of the celestial tree.

Earlier I have submitted the theory that these animals represent the two Aśvins[116] who are known from Indian iconography as being placed on the right and left side of the sun-god and provided with a horse's head on the trunk.[117]

There is more to be said in favour of this theory. One of the Aśvins' characteristics is that they are twin-gods and that their name suggests a close connection with the horse. They frequently act as spouses of the female sun-god (Sūryā), and they are closely related to the sun and the light also in other respects; they are the guardians of the elixir of life and of the honey-mead *(madhu)*, and as such act as physicians to the gods, as donors of youth, opulence, offspring, and as helpers of the needy.[118]

If we compare these features with the following particulars about the two gunungan-animals: that their abode is the celestial tree which derives its name from the horse (aśvattha literally means 'horse station'); that they only take their place on either side of the tree when the monster-head, pre-eminently a sun-symbol, is present, and are invisible when this

[115] W. F. Stutterheim, *loc. cit.*, p. 339.
[116] *Apud* Stutterheim, *loc. cit.*
[117] Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Indian Iconography*, II, II, p. 543 and I, II, pl. XC c.
[118] Macdonell, *Vedic Myth.*, p. 49.

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symbol is absent; that the celestial tree is closely related to the notions of immortality, honey-mead, vitality, youth, opulence, and offspring, then it appears beyond doubt that here the unique and remarkable fact presents itself that the twin-animals of the modern Javanese gunungan, keep alive the memory of the twin Aśvin gods who in India have completely sunk into oblivion, a memory that goes back beyond the beginning of Vedic times and belongs to the most ancient heritage of the Aryan race.[119]

Some details of gunungan symbolism remain which do not fit in the system of the tree-representations familiar to us, and whose interpretation for the time being is a pious hope. They are found on Pl. 68*b*: the garuḍa-heads on the inside of the wing extremities, the snake winding downwards round the tree-stem, and the bull and the lion occupying the place of the aśvin-animals mentioned above.[120]

As to the Balinese gunungan, the few specimens of this figure that have been published give the impression that, unlike the Javanese gunungan, the tree part has been emphasized resulting in a certain simplicity and monotony in the mountain part (Pl. 69*a, b*).

The two specimens known to me are evidently based on the simple, not the twofold, padmamūla. On Pl. 69*b* this mūla appears as a jewel-shaped object having on either side two smaller mountains, probably meant to represent the four supporting mountains grouped round the Meru's central top, but here they are projected in the flat plane and placed side by side.

Pl. 69*a* shows a less patent situation. Here the central top probably is represented by the turban-like object right under the bull-and-lion figure, whilst the buttressing mountains, only two in number, are placed on a

[119] Cp. Macdonell, *op. cit.* p. 49: "Though they hold a distinct position among the deities of light..., their connection with any definite phenomenon of light is so obscure, that their original nature has been a puzzle to Vedic interpreters from the earliest time ..."; p. 53: "As to the physical base of the A., the language of the Ṛṣis is so vague that they themselves do not seem to have understood what phenomenon these deities represented."

[120] A plausible parallel is the serpent-figure of the Devī Kuṇḍalinī in the microcosm (p. 91), but it leaves unexplained why the animal winds downwards instead of upwards. Another parallel is the Koṭisimbala-jākata beginning with the words: "Once upon a time... the bodhisattva was a tree spirit dwelling in the top of a cotton tree. A king of the rocs... seized by the tail a king of the snakes a thousand fathoms long... flew along the treetops towards the cotton tree. The snake king... wound himself round it firmly. Owing to the roc-king's strength and the great size of the snake king the banyan-tree was uprooted. But the snake king would not let go the banyan. The roc-king took the snake-king, banyan and all, to the cotton tree", etc.

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slightly higher level. I cannot account for the two twisting nāgas at the foot of the mountain part in the tree-organism. The same reptiles play an important part in Balinese and also in Eastern and modern Javanese art and represent, in my opinion, Iḍā and Piṅgalā, the two serpent-like arteries in microcosm we met before (p. 91). But it still remains a mystery why they do not emerge from the mountain part just like their partners of the Javanese gunungan on Pl. 67*a*.

If we pass over this little problem and examine the tree part further, we first of all notice how markedly the branches grow downward (Pl. 69*a*). This is even more distinct on Pl. 69*b* where we see that, apart from the four pairs of downward-curved branches of the celestial tree, there are two branches — the side-branches of the padmamūla — that sprout from the central mountain and send their twigs with fan-formed leaves in an upward direction. So this clearly brings out how both cosmic trees with their branches and leaves grow against each other.

For the rest, the tree-part as compared with the Javanese counterpart of it has little remarkable but for the doubling of the branches, the absence of animals, and that of the monster-head. On Pl. 69*b*, however, the absence of this head is offset by the stem being thickened just above the lowermost of the four pairs of branches and forming a round organ. The meaning of this thickening is not difficult to guess: it is the brahmamūla of the celestial tree which by way of exception here appears in its most original state, *viz.* as a vegetal organ.

In conclusion, I submit a few remarks on the macrocosmic equivalents of the gunungan and its component parts. These are not easy to determine as the padmamūla's basic form, which has to be our starting-point, appears here in its bipartite form. Though this has been discussed already from the morphological point of view, we have no yet examined its relation to the macrocosm. In addition, the many differences and contradictions in the Indian cosmological conceptions tend to aggravate the difficulties when an attempt is made to trace the gunungan parts to their macrocosmic equivalents.

Under these circumstances I confine myself to pointing out that the three component parts of the gunungan: mountain, stem and top, may be considered to correspond respectively with the base of the Meru, its top (stambha, pillar, solar standard) cleaving the sky, and the celestial regions. After our discussion on p. 140 we need not dwell on the meaning of the stambha and the monster-head, and we concentrate our attention on the composition of the mountain part.

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The inverted stepped pyramid on the top of the five-topped Meru on Pl. 67 *a*, may be compared with the building mentioned in the Tibetan legend related by Grünwedel,[121] referring to the fivefold sanctuary (chaitya) that, according to tradition, was situated in China on the top of the Pañchaśīrshaparvata. The story goes that from the foundation of this building rose a jambu-tree and that at the same time from the Buddha's forehead there came forth a golden beam of light which striking the tree produced an outgrowth that brought forth the rhizome of a lotus-plant, whereupon from the interior of that tree the prince of scholars Ārya Mañjuśrī was born. It is evident that in this story — a clear replica of the god Brahmā's miraculous birth from the navel-begotten lotus-flower — the chaitya corresponds with the padmamūla, the jambu with the terrestrial tree sprung from it, the outgrowth with the brahmamūla and the lotus with the celestial tree, whilst Mañjuśrī represents the supreme Brahman principle whose abode is in the empyrean.[122]

The fact that in this Tibetan story the miraculous jambu is supposed to rise from the foundation of the chaiyta suggests that the building, like the stepped pyramid of the gunungan, was conceived in an inverted position. Consequently, the combination of mountain-top and inverted chaitya produced a figure of the same hourglass-shape as the mountain part of the gunungan on Pl. 67 *a*.

Finally, we notice that the water-vessel on Pl. 66 *b* with its swimming fishes undoubtedly has the same character as the mountain-lake from which, according to the Simhāsanadvātrimśikā-story, rises the cosmic pillar on whose top every noontide the sun settles (cf. p. 96). In this story the replacement of the lake by the kumbha, of the pillar by the tree, and of the sun by a monster-head, will produce the gunungan picture on Pl. 66 *b*.

The scope of the present study does not allow us to dwell on the further, widely diverging, tales regarding the existence of a mountain lake or sea,[123] sometimes represented as a sea of light or celestial ocean, and localized in various places.

4. THE STEM IN HUMAN FORM

Before discussing the transformations of the stem into a god, I mention a few cases in which the stambha serves as intermediary in the identification of both units and either the stem conceived as a pillar or the deity in the shape of a pillar is the recipient of marks of homage.

An example of the former we already met in the Indradhvaja (p. 152), the tree stripped of branches and leaves which in this form is identified with the stambha and, on the occasion of the great Indra-festival, is worshipped and adored as the god Indra. It receives the epithets of this god

[121] *Mythologie*, p. 106. The story has been translated by G. C. Toussaint, "Le Padma Thaṅ Yig", *Etudes asiatiques*, II (1925), p. 326 ff.

[122] The strange part of the story is that, contrary to expectation, the jambu has been placed below and the lotus on top. I cannot explain this irregularity.

[123] Kirfel, *Kosmographie*, p. 39; Przyluski, *Le symbolisme du pilier de Sarnath*, pp. 481, 493; Hertel, *Die arische Feuerlehre*, 1925, pp. 12, 16; H. Lüders, *Varuṇa*, 1951, pp. 9 ff., and *passim*.

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and is also materially identified with him as is shown by the identification of its foot, central part and top with the god's feet, trunk and head.

The deity as a pillar

Besides the representation of the pillar as a god we have that of the god as a pillar. This is illustrated by the following examples.

1) One of the numerous names by which Śiva-Rudra is known in the epic is Sthāṇu 'wooden post', 'column', 'pillar', or 'bare stem', 'leafless stem', 'tree stump',[124] beside which stands *sthāṇubhūta* meaning 'he who has become a pillar' or 'he whose essence is a pillar', and indicating the *sādhu* who has made the vow that for months, or even years, on end he will assume the posture of an immovable pillar.

As we know from other sources[125] that the sādhu in making a *vrata* generally intends to appropriate a characteristic quality or attitude of the god worshipped and so to identify himself with this god or one of his manifestations *(mūrtis)*, the sthāṇubhūta, then, is to be regarded as a worshipper of Śiva who by his *vrata* has identified himself with this god,[126] and particularly with the god's manifestation as sthāṇu, pillar, or stem.

2) The Liṅgodbhavamūrti-myth of Śiva[127] relates how once the gods Brahmā and Vishṇu quarreled over the question which of the two was the mightiest. Suddenly the god Śiva appeared before them in the figure of the primeval liṅga, surrounded by thousands of flames, resembling

[124] Under this name Śiva is worshipped in the third stanza of the Calcutta inscription issued by the Hindu-Javanese king Erlangga in the year 1041 A.D. This stanza — which also contains an interesting allusion to the wishing-tree — runs as follows:

yaḥ sthāṇur apy atitarām yathepsitārthaprado guṇair jagatām
kalpadrumam atanum adhaḥ karoti tasmai Śivāya namaḥ

According to Kern's translation: "Hail to Śiva who surpasses the great wishing tree because, in spite of his being a *sthāṇu*, he through his supreme qualities answers even better the wishes and needs of the world."

[125] F. D. K. Bosch, "Het Lingga-heiligdom van Dinaja", *TBG*, LXIV (1924), p. 244, n. 4 and p. 253 n. 1.

[126] A clear illustration of this kind of identification is found in the following description by Campbell Oman, *The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India*, p. 49: "A *sadhu* whom I saw at a religious festival, a big and powerful fellow, had a strong wooden framework erected to support a huge earthenware jar provided with a perforation at the bottom, from which a stream of water could stream out. Round about there were at least twenty-five large pots of water, to replenish the jar when in use. Under the jar the *sadhu* was in the habit of sitting during the night, particularly during the small hours, from about three o'clock till daybreak, with a stream of water falling on his head and flowing down over his person to the ground. It was winter time, and very cold work no doubt, but the *sadhu* had his reward in gratified vanity; for in the eyes of his numerous admirers he was Siva himself with the Ganges falling from heaven upon his head and flowing thence to bless and fertilise the earth." (Spacing mine — B.)

[127] *Liṅga-Pur.*, I, 17, 5-52; 19, 8 ff.

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hundreds of cosmic fires, having no beginning, middle or end and being the origin of all things. Hereupon Brahmā, transformed into a goose and Vishṇu assuming the figure of a boar, tried to get to the top and to the foot of that fiery pillar but after one thousand years of fruitless toil they had to admit failure. Realising then their humbleness they threw themselves down at the feet of the supreme god and meekly paid him homage.

The point in this story, the identity of god and pillar, is even more distinct in iconography than in literature. Here the primeval liṅga is pictured as a flaming pillar having in its centre an aperture through which the god in his four-armed figure is visible,[128] Pl. 62*a*.

3) Something of the same nature is to be found in the equally well-known story of the Narasiṃhāvatāra of the god Vishṇu[129]: Prahlāda, son of Hiraṇyakaśipu, prince of demons and mortal enemy of Viṣhnu, is a devoted admirer of this god and constantly worships him as the all-pervading lord of creation. Annoyed over this attitude Hiraṇyakaśipu asks the youth whether Vishṇu, if he actually is the all-pervader, is also present in the pillar in front of him, and with these words the prince of demons draws his sword and cleaves the pillar. At the same moment a terrible roar is heard, the pillar splits and the furious god in the figure of a man-lion jumps out, throws himself on the unbelieving demon and tears him to pieces.

The sculptures depicting this avatāra closely resemble those of the Liṅgodbhavamūrti of Śiva. Here, too, there is a pillar, sometimes decorated with an ascendent floral ornament, and thereby manifesting its original vegetal character. The pillar opens and shows in the interior the figure of the four-armed man-lion.[130]

4) The Kathāsaritsāgara contains the story[131] of a merchant's son named Niśchayadatta who was a worshipper of Mahākāla. Every day, when he had finished his bathing and his worship, he used to go and anoint himself in a cemetery near the temple of that god. And the young man placed the unguent on a stone pillar that stood there, and so anointed himself every day, rubbing his back against it. In that way the pillar eventually became very smooth and polished. Then there came that way a draughtsman with a sculptor; the first, seeing that the pillar was very smooth, drew on it a figure of Gaurī, and the sculptor with his chisel in

[128] Gopinatha Rao, *Elements*, II, I, p. 105 ff.; Krishna Sastri, *S. Ind. Images*, p. 93, Pl. 58.
[129] *Bhāg. Pur.*, VII, 8, 12-30.
[130] Rao, *Elements*, I, I, pp. 145 ff. Sastri, *op.cit.*, p. 24, Pl. 16.
[131] Tawney, I, p. 334.

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pure sport carved it on the stone. Then, after they departed, a certain daughter of the Vidyādharas came there to worship Mahākāla, and saw that image of Gaurī on the stone. From the clearness of the image she inferred the proximity of the goddess, and after worshipping, she entered that stone pillar to rest. In the meanwhile Niśchayadatta came there and beheld that figure of Umā carved on the stone. He first anointed his limbs, and then placing the unguent on another part of the stone, began to anoint his back by rubbing it against the stone. When the Vidyādhara maiden inside the pillar saw that, she was overcome with love for that young man, and stretching forth her hand from inside the pillar she anointed his back then and there out of affection. Immediately the merchant's son felt the touch and heard the jingling of the bracelet and caught hold of her hand which protruded from the pillar like a shoot from the trunk of a tree . . . (the sequel of the story is irrelevant).

It is interesting to note that what this story tells us in words has taken shape and form in the well-known yaskshī sculptures of the railings of Bharhut and Bodh Gayā. In both cases a tree-spirit — in the story it is a vidyādharī, in the sculptures it is a yakshī — has identified herself with a stambha, pillar, which, though being made of stone, is conceived as the stem of a plant or the trunk of a tree. This last point is put beyond doubt by the comparison of the hand of the Vidyādharī with a shoot from the tree-trunk.

The stem as a deity

When the Tree is transformed into a human being, or inversely, the stambha ceases to be an intermediary. Both are directly compared or identified with each other, change into each other, or manifest their identity in some other way.

That this transformation reaches back to ancient times is evident from RV VI 13, 1; VIII 19, 33 and IX 5, 10 where the god Agni, conceived anthropomorphically, is identified with the cosmic tree with thousand branches. The same applies to Bṛih. Up. X III 9, 28, which identifies man with a tree, his hair with the leaves, his skin with the bark, his blood with the sap, and his flesh with the wooden parts.

The epic gives the god Śiva-Rudra the following names of trees[132]: Vṛiksha, Taru, Vṛikshākāra ('whose form is a tree'), Viśālaśākha ('the one with the broad branches'), Bakula, Chandana, Udbhid ('the sprouting one')

[132] Meyer, *Trilogie*, III, p. 186. I do not agree with his remark in II, p. 65 that the fact that Vishṇu in long litanies of names is also addressed as Vanaspati has no real significance.

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(Mbh. VII, 203, 33); the same god is called here 'whose body is shrouded in trees', which means 'tree amongst trees', and 'clothed in the bark of a tree' (Mbh. VII, 203, 31).

We are further told that the aśvattha is the manifestation of the god Vishṇu, just as the palāśa (Butea frondosa) is that of the god Brahmā, the nyagrodha that of the god Śiva, and the udumbara (Ficus glomerata) that of the god Yama. Another version is that the root of the aśvattha is Brahmā's abode, its stem that of Vishṇu and its top that of Śiva.[133]

The identity of Vishṇu and aśvattha is clearly shown in Mbh. XIII, 126, 4-6 where the god says of himself: That man who adores every day the Aśvattha is considered as adoring the whole universe with the celestials and asuras and human beings. Indeed, staying within these, I accept, in my own form, the adoration that is offered to them. The worship that is offered to these is the adoration offered to me. This has been so as long as the worlds exist. Those little-witted men who adore me in a different way worship me in vain, for worship of that kind I never accept. Cp. Mbh. XIII, 149, 101: Vishṇu . . . who is the evergrowing and tall Banyan that overtops all other trees, He who is the sacred fig-tree.

Certain trees, particularly the sacred fig-tree and the banyan-tree, are often identified not only with deities of higher order but also with beings belonging to the humbler mythology. So Mbh. XII, 69, 41 says: 'Cutting of sacred trees (chaityavṛikshas) should be avoided, even a leaf of a sacred tree must not be destroyed, for these serve as the abode of gods, yakshas, rākshasas, nāgas, piśāchas, gandharvas, apsarases, and cruel bhūtas.

Before we proceed we shall have to give special attention to the most important group of these tree-spirits, the yakshas, whom we have met already frequently.[134]

Tree-spirit and yaksha

The importance of these spirits is not an immediate result of the rank of *di minores* generally conferred on the yakshas in Buddhist and Hindu

[133] Meyer, *Trilogie*, II, p. 182. Cf. Enthoven, *The folklore of Bombay*, 1924, p. 118; Sarat Chandra Mitra, "On the worship of the pipal tree in North Bihar", *JB & ORS*, VI (1920), p. 572.

[134] For the following review the main authors consulted are: Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas* I and II; id., "The Origin of the Buddha Image", *The Art Bull.*, IX (1927); id., "The Yakṣa of the Veda and Upaniṣads", *QJMythSoc.*, XXVIII (1937-38). See further Sylvain Lévi, "Le catalogue géographique des yakṣa dans la Mahāmāyūrī", *JA*, XI, 5, 1915, p. 19 ff.; Rhys Davids and Stede, *The PTS's Pali-Engl. Dict.*, s.v. *yakkha*; Ramaprasad Chhanda, *Four anc. yakṣa statues, Univ. of Calc., J. Dept. of Letters*, IV, 1921; E. Arbman, *Rudra*, p. 180.

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literature. Here they are a group of beings closely associated with and little distinct from the rākshasas and are usually bracketed together with other groups of bhūtas, spirits, and demi-gods: the nāgas, gandharvas, asuras, daityas, apsarases, kumbhāṇḍas, kinnaras, pretas, and such like. When acting in groups they are further known as servants and attendants of the god Kuvera, one of the four or eight Mahārājas, and Lokapāla of the north, residing in his magic town Ālaka on the top of the Kailāsa. When the yakshas appear independently they resemble the nāgas in so far as, in accordance with their Agni and Soma nature, they harbour two souls in one breast. They are kindly disposed to man and, as ministering spirits, patron-saints, genii loci, make themselves useful in many ways[135]: as guardians of hidden treasures and riches, granters of wishes, donors of opulence, fertility and offspring, as gate-keepers, protectors of cities, possessors of supernatural powers, teachers of virtue and wisdom, architects of palaces, particularly as bearers and supporters in various situations (cf. the yakshas supporting the hoofs of the horse Kaṇṭhaka, and the pavilion in which the bodhisattva descends to earth).

A violent contrast to these excellent qualities is the Agni side of their nature. "Leurs goûts étaient connus, et ces goûts étaient déplorables", as Foucher puts it.[136] Indeed, according to Rāmāyaṇa I 35, 18 yakshas are *raudrāḥ* and *piśitāśanāḥ*, and in narrative literature they have a bad reputation as blood-thirsty giants and barbarians, fond of liquor and human flesh and indulging in all sorts of atrocities and cruelties. These bad qualities are reflected in plastic art which usually depicts them in the same way as rākshasas known by their savage looks, their big bulging eyes, whiskers, and flowing curly hair[137] (Pl. 79*a*).

One feature I wish to emphasize here is the appearance of yakshas as tree-spirits. There is an abundance of stories of yakshas dwelling in a

[135] Lévi, *op. cit.*, p.119, characterizes this side of the yakcha nature as follows: "Le Yakṣa est essentiellement un personnage divin étroitement associé par la tradition aux souvenirs locaux; les uns ont brillamment réussi, et, par le concours des circonstances ou par le prestige de la poésie, ils se sont imposés à l'Inde entière; d'autres, moins heureux, n'ont joui que d'une notoriété de clocher. Par le rôle qu'ils jouent et par l'inégalité de leur destin, ils rappellent de bien près nos saints patronaux."

[136] *AGBG*, II, p. 42.

[137] Cf. Jātakamālā VIII, ed. Kern, p. 44, transl. Speyer, p. 61, where in the story of Maitrībala the five yakshas in reply to the question of the king: "What sort of repast will agree with your digestion? " declare: "Raw human flesh, freshly cut off and still warm, and human blood is the food and drink of yakshas." After which, they reassumed their own disfigured and frightful features, exhibiting their mouths rendered ferocious by large teeth, their eyes fierce and red, flaming and squinting, their flat noses wide-opened and misshapen. Their hair and beard had the tawny colour of flames, and their complexion was as dark as clouds big with rain.

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tree, particularly an aśvattha or nyagrodha, and suddenly jumping out or transforming themselves into them.[138] One example out of many will illustrate this.

A king lies down to sleep under an aśvattha-tree. Next morning there suddenly appears before him a brahman with demoniacal looks, black as soot, and with hair yellow as flashes of lightning, carrying a garland of entrails in his hand, and an upavīta of human hair round his body. He gnaws at a skull and drinks blood from a human skull. Spitting fire he thus addresses the king: "Know that I am a brahman yaksha called Jvalamukha and this aśvattha, my abode, must not be touched even by gods."[139]

In the above sketch the yaksha appears as a being belonging to lower mythology but many facts go to show that, originally, he occupied a much higher place in the hierarchy of Indian theological conceptions.

In the Vedic period the neuter *yaksha* is synonymous with 'Tad Ekam', 'the one', the cosmic pillar, and denotes the supreme deity.[140] AV X 7, 38: The Great Being *(mahad yaksham)* in the centre of the cosmos, performing tapas, dwelling on the back of the waters, in Him (*i.e.* in Skambha, the cosmic pillar to whom the hymn is addressed) all gods are embodied like branches in the stem of the tree.

[138] Tawney's translation of *KSS*, 28, 35, runs as follows: "And the land of that king was filled with heaps of gold by means of the Yakshiṇīs... who transformed themselves into trees, as the heaven is filled with the peaks of Meru." In his re-edition of Tawney's translation Penzer remarked on this passage (Vol. III, p. 25): "It is hard to understand why they had to turn themselves into trees. The explanation must be that Brockhaus misread *vṛishṭair* for *vṛikshair*. Thus the meaning would be that the Yakshiṇīs poured down the gold as rain from heaven, a much more likely interpretation." On the contrary, this "Schlimmbesserung" should certainly be dropped. The word *vṛikshair* meaning that the Yakshiṇīs transformed themselves into trees, i.e. into wishing-trees producing gold and jewels (cf. the Besnagar wishing-tree raining gold pieces, supra p. 78), makes excellent sense.

[139] *KSS*, 94, 64.

[140] Coomaraswamy summarizes the results of his enquiry into the meaning of the word yaksha in Vedic and Upanishadic literature as follows (*loc. cit.*, p. 239): "Yakṣa is virtually synonymous or rather coincident in reference with Brahman, Ātman, Puruṣa, Mṛtyu, Agni, Prajāpati, Manas, etc., and designates that single spiritual principle which assumes a multiplicity and diversity of aspects by its immanence in all things; being at the same time essentially invisible and at the same time always manifesting, and in this sense recognizable. Almost the only English word that covers such meanings is also that which is the direct equivalent of Ātman, *viz.* 'Spirit'. This word, moreover, lends itself conveniently to usage in the plural, and whether in a good or a bad sense... The alternative '(Holy) Ghost' in the same way lends itself conveniently to usage in the plural as 'ghosts', whether in the sense of 'spirit of the deceased' or in that of 'spook'. It is, however, perhaps by 'daimon'... that yakṣa could best be translated considering in particular the original meaning of daimon as synonymous with 'God' (not necessarily of lower order than any other God) and as 'guardian angel'."

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In post-Vedic literature, too, there are many particulars showing that the yaksha originally was credited with a nature surpassing by far the partly kind-hearted, partly blood-thirsty character by which he is known in lower mythology and folklore.

In the oldest Buddhist literature the word 'yaksha' is actually synonymous with deva, devatā and devaputra, names for various gods of high rank. This is shown by the list of yaksha-captains in the Āṭānāṭīya Suttanta (Dīgha Nikāya III 195 ff.) mentioning amongst other gods Indra, Soma, Varuṇa and Prajāpati,[141] and by a similar list in the Mahāmāyūrī (third or fourth century A.D.) giving the names of Vishṇu, Kārtikeya, Śaṅkara (Śiva), Krakuchchhanda, Suprabuddha (the Buddha's father in law), Makaradhvaja (Kāma and Māra), and Vajrapāṇi.[141] In particular, 'yaksha' is a common name for the god Indra (Śakra) and the Buddha, too, is often addressed by this name. It is also worth noticing that the word *bhagavat* by which Vishṇu, Śiva and the Buddha usually are indicated is also used for the four Lokapālas, including Kuvera, lord of yakshas, and also for various yaksha-kings individually.[142]

Not only by his name does the yaksha rank with the superior gods. It certainly is a remarkable and important fact that at the beginning of Buddhism the existing sanctuaries and places of worship, *āyatanas* or *chaityas*,[143] originally were dedicated not to the service of gods but to yaksha-cult. These sanctuaries, in their simplest form called *vṛiksha-chaityas* or *chaityas*, were aśvatthas or banyan-trees whose base was enclosed by a low wall or palisade, *vedikā* or *prākāra*, in the manner of the Javanese 'waringin kurung'.[144]

The following story from the Dhammapada Atthakathā deals with the founding of such a sanctuary.[145]

Once at Śrāvastī there lived a householder without offspring. One day he noticed by the side of the road a tall tree of the forest (vanaspati). He reflected that in the tree there was bound to dwell a mighty tree-spirit. He cleared the ground round the tree, ringed it with a fence (prākāra) and sprinkled fine sand inside. After decking out the tree with flags and

[141] Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, I, p. 11.

[142] Sylvain Lévi, *loc. cit.*, p. 19 ff.

[143] *Chaitya* (Pāli *chetiya*) originally means not a temple but any object used as a symbol or for ritual purposes. For the idea of 'temple' or 'sanctuary' the term *chetiyaghara* is used. B.C. Law, "Cetiya in Buddh. literature", *Studia Indo-Iranica*, 1931, p. 42; Coomaraswamy, *Elements*, note 6.

[144] Hopkins, *Epic Myth.*, p. 72. Ramaprasad Chandra, *Four anc. yakṣa statues*. Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, I, p. 18. *The Origin*, p. 7; *HIIA*, p. 47.

[145] Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, I, p. 22.

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pennants he made this vow: if I am given a son or daughter I shall pay thee great homage.

Apart from this tree-worship in its purest form we find another kind of cult in which a four-legged stone table or altar was placed under the tree dedicated to the yaksha.[146] Such a stone table under a bodhi-tree (aśvattha) in which dwelled a yaksha served as a seat for the bodhisattva in the night of the sambodhi at Bodh Gayā. It is well-known that many chaityas of this kind were famous in the early period of Buddhism, and in Buddhist literature they are frequently mentioned as places of refuge and rest for wayfarers.[147]

A third group of sanctuaries consisted of wooden or brick constructions in which a yaksha-image was placed. These buildings are always said to be ancient, grand and world-famous, and the detailed descriptions of some which are available — *e.g.* that of the yaksha Pūrṇabhadra — show that real temples are meant provided with gates and niches, abundantly decorated with sunshades and pennants, and that they were the scene of miracles, of countless offerings and of worship by vast crowds of devout followers. From other sources we know that the pūjā offered to yakshas consisted of the presentation of flowers, incense, food, clothing, and of the ringing of bells, the chanting of hymns, and the performance of plays.[148]

Finally, we may point out that the oldest detached images in Indian art are yaksha-images. According to Coomeraswamy's description, they represent the type of cult-images prevalent in the oldest times and appear in the form of standing figures "with the right hand raised in a sort of abhayamudrā, whilst the left hand rests on the hip and is either clenched or holds the end of the robe. The legs are firmly planted on the ground, the feet being kept apart. Stylistically the figure is massive and clumsy. Its prominent characteristic is brute force and energy and the complete absence of spiritualization or refinement."[149]

The foregoing remarks lead us to the important question of how to explain the dual character of the yaksha-figure, on the one hand an object of adoration and worship, having the aspect of a deity of the highest rank and equal to Tad Ekam, Brahman, Ātman, Prajāpati, Indra, Śiva, Vishṇu and the Buddha, on the other hand a figure belonging to the

[146] Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, p. 17. Cf. Burgess, *The Buddh. Stūpa of Amarāvatī*, Pl. XLV 3. These places of sacrifice are also known on Java by the name of *sanggar waringin*.
[147] Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[148] Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[149] Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, p. 29; *The Origin*, p. 17.

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humblest order of demi-gods and demons, the blood-thirsty savage and oger from folklore, bracketed together with bhūtas, pretas, rākshasas, and suchlike grim creatures of Indian imagination.

In considering this question we shall do well to start from the yaksha's most striking characteristic, that of tree-spirit, provided we attach to it all the importance to which by its origin it is entitled. This implies that this spirit appears in two main forms. Firstly it manifests itself as the primeval creative breath immanent in the mighty Cosmic Tree which with its branches and leaves fills the infinite space, in which case the spirit is equivalent to the supreme Brahman, or to one of his many divine manifestations no matter whether they are called Tad Ekam, Skambha, Indra, Śiva, Vishṇu, or Buddha.

But the same creative breath may also be imagined as animating one or other specimen of the plant which on earth represents the Cosmic Tree, *viz.* an aśvattha, nyagrodha, or some other tree. In that case the spirit's dimensions are reduced to earthly and human size. He becomes one of the many other vegetal spirits which are characterized by the predominance of demoniacal Agni qualities or propitious Soma properties.

The nāga as a tree-sprit and as an anthropomorphic figure

The nature of the nāga in many respects resembles that of the yaksha, as was pointed out before when the vegetal properties of the mythical serpent were discussed (p. 136). There is no need to dwell on this again. I only wish to ask the attention for two stories in which the nāga plays a similar part as tree-spirit as is usually assigned to the yaksha.

In the Mahāvāṇija-jātaka (no. 493) we read: Certain merchants having come to a forest waterless and poor of food espied a large banyan-tree cool-shaded and beautiful. They sat down in the shade of that tree and in their folly they thought: "This tree is wet and drips of water; come, let us cut the eastern branch of this tree." The branch, being cut, produced clear and limpid water, and the merchants drank as much as they liked. In the same manner they cut the southern, western and northern branch of the tree which respectively produced plenty of food, women in beautiful garments and ornaments, silver and gold, and all sort of jewels. After that a fifth time they considered in their folly: "Come, let us cut the root of this tree, so that we get more." In spite of the warnings of the leader of the caravan, the merchants proceeded to whet their axes and to attack the root of the tree. Whereupon the tree-spirit, in the shape of a nāga-king, incensed with wrath at their ingratitude and greed, made his appearance

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and, except the leader of the caravan, reduced them all to ashes.

Still more interesting is the well known legend of the nāgarāja Muchilinda according to its oldest version recorded in the Pāli-canon.[150] Here we read that the Buddha, after attaining enlightenment, went to the Muchilinda-tree and sat cross-legged at the foot of that tree during seven days, enjoying the bliss of emancipation. Now at that time a great cloud appeared out of season and for seven days it was cloudy weather attended with rain and a cold wind. Then Muchilinda, the serpent-king, issued from his abode and, enveloping the body of the Blessed One seven times with his coils, kept his large hood spread over the Master's head.

The later versions of the story, as we know, do not mention a Muchilinda-tree but Muchilinda appears only in his serpent-like shape in order to protect the Buddha from rain and wind. But Vogel rightly remarks: "Evidently there is some connexion between the Nāga Muchilinda and the tree of the same name under which the Buddha was seated. May we perhaps assume that in the ancient story the Nāga was conceived as a tree-spirit?"[151]

The close association between nāga and yaksha is also reflected in art, particularly in the early period of Buddhist art when nāgas appeared as detached images in human form in a style which is similar to that of yaksha-figures.[152]

Another proof for this relationship lies in the fact that of old nāgas in certain parts of India were — and still are — worshipped as gods. They receive offerings of flowers, incense, food and drink, and other gifts, festivals are held in their honour (so the famous Nāgapañchamī), temples are built and pilgrimages to their dwelling-places are arranged, in short, they are made the centre of a similar pūjā as was bestowed on the yakshas.[153]

The above review mainly intended to elucidate the following points.

1) Of old the godhead was represented as a tree, particularly as the aśvattha and nyagrodha, and, inversely, the trees were conceived to be manifestations of the godhead.

2) The spirits embodied in these trees, the yaksha and the nāga, were paid divine homage.

[150] *Mahāvagga*, I, 3. J. Ph. Vogel, *Serpent Lore*, p. 102.

[151] Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 103, n. 2 points out that in Lalitavistara, I, p. 11, 1 the *muchilinda* and the *mahāmuchilinda* appear in a list of various trees. (See also Kern, *Manuel*, p. 21 n. 67. A nāga also appears as a tree-spirit in the curious story related by M. W. de Visser, "The dragon in China and Japan", *VKAW*, XIII, 2, 1913 p. 15.

[152] Coomaraswamy, *The Origin*, p. 17.

[153] Vogel, *op. cit.* ch. VII.

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On the basis of these primary facts we are now able to consider a far more fundamental problem: the origin of the Buddha-image.

The origin of the Buddha-image. First stage

In the introduction to his well-known study on the above-mentioned problem Foucher remarks:[154] "Let us go straight to the most striking feature of this old Buddhist school. Although well known to specialists, it will not fail to surprise uninformed readers. When we find the ancient stone-carvers of India in full activity, we observe that they are very industriously engaged in carrying out the strange undertaking of representing the life of Buddha without Buddha. We have here a fact which, improbable as it may seem, Cunningham long ago demonstrated. It is established on the written testimony of the artists themselves. Those of Barhut inform us by an inscription, that such and such a person on his knees before a throne 'is rendering homage to the Blessed One'. Now, without exception, the throne is vacant; at the most, there is a symbol indicating the invisible presence of Buddha. The latest researches have only opened our eyes to the extent of the field of application of this constant rule; it holds good for the years which preceded as also for those which followed the Sambodhi, for the youth as also for the old age of the Master."

The mysterious phenomenon in ancient Buddhist art signalized here by Foucher, that it does not give a picture of the Buddha but both before and after sambodhi represented him by a symbol, has been the subject of various widely differing explanations. We shall only dwell briefly on that by Foucher which is the most ingenious and generally favoured.

This scholar pointed out[155] that of old amongst the Buddhist faithful the custom prevailed to symbolize the four main events in the Buddha's life, his birth at Kapilavastu, the acquiring of the sambodhi at Gayā, the first preaching at Benares, and his death at Kusinagara. The birth was symbolized by a lotus, the sambodhi by a bodhi-tree, the preaching by a wheel, and the death by a stūpa. These symbols were known to the faithful throughout India, partly as a result of the habit amongst pilgrims visiting these sacred places to take home with them as souvenirs clay-tablets in which the symbols were printed.[156] These symbols in the course of time

[154] "Les débuts de l'art bouddhique", *JA*, 1911, p. 58 (=*The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, 1917, p. 4).

[155] *The Beginnings*, p. 8 ff.

[156] Coomaraswamy questions this. In *The Origin*, p. 8, he says: "It needs only be remarked that M. Foucher assumes that the symbols were used by Buddhists in the first place as *signacula*, little documents carried away by pilgrims visiting the sacred sites of the

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came to represent the Buddha and, when at Bharhut and Sānchi episodes from Buddha's life were depicted, it was only natural that these symbols were used to represent his person, just as in early Christian art the figure of Christ was pictured as a cross, a lamb, or a fish.

At first sight this theory seems quite plausible, but it will not bare further examination. At best, it explains the absence of the Buddha-image on scenes with a bodhi-tree, wheel, or stūpa, but it fails us in the case of scenes with a different symbol, *e.g.* that of the Great Departure at Sānchi, in which the horse supposed to carry the bodhisattva has no rider, and only a sun-shade suggests the presence of the chief character, or that of a multitude of worshippers in front of an empty throne paying homage to an absent Buddha.

But now the question rises whether in these pictures the Buddha is actually absent. Foucher thought so and practically everybody has shared his view, but I would submit that in the eyes of the faithful the Buddha was indeed present in person, be it not in the figure of the Śramaṇa Śākyamuni. If we recall the passage from the epic where Vishṇu says of himself: "He that worships the aśvattha everyday is deemed to worship the whole universe. Those who in their narrow-mindedness worship me in a different manner worship in vain as I do not accept such adoration", and if, furthermore, we take into account that not only Vishṇu but also Śiva, and even every deity, could in the beginning be represented by and worshipped as a tree, then it becomes understandable that at the initial stage of the Mahāyāna, when the human Śākyamuni gradually developed into the divine Buddha and in the eyes of his followers began to assume the position of supreme god, this Buddha, too, could be represented as a tree, the Tree *par excellence*, aśvattha or nyagrodha, just as his predecessors for whom the great light had risen were supposed to be embodied each in his own tree.[157]

Four Great Events. Presumably these would have been of terra cotta or metal; but no trace of such objects has ever been found, and such early terra cottas as are known in some abundance are... of a quite different sort."

[157] According to the Nidānakathā (Rhys Davids, *Buddh. Birth Stories*, pp. 48-51), the Bodhi-tree of Vipaśyin was the Pātali, of Śikhin the Puṇḍarīka, of Viśvabhū the Śāla, of Krakucchanda the Śirīśā, of Kanakamuni the Udumbara, and of Kāśyapa the Nyagrodha. The names of the trees of the remaining 18 Buddhas prior to Śākyamuni are given in the same text (pp. 30-48).

In connection with the worship of the Buddha as a tree, the introduction to the Kāliṅgabodhi-jākata (no. 479) is also characteristic. Coomaraswamy, *Elements*, p. 4, summarizes it as follows: "...Ananda desires to set up in the Jetavana a substitute for the Buddha, so that people may be able to make their offerings of wreaths and garlands at the door of the Gandhakuṭi... not only when the Buddha is in residence, but also when

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Now the point is that not only the tree in its natural state but also its many symbolical appearances which we met in the course of our examination were capable of calling up in the minds of the faithful the divine principle embodied in the person of the Buddha, and to materialize his sacred presence in their midst.

These appearances, far from being limited to the four mentioned by Foucher, include — theoretically that is — all existing and conceivable symbolic transformations of the Basic Form, which means both the complete and the rudimentary ones, those consisting of animals or human beings, and those in which the component parts of the Basic Form have been substituted by emblems. It seems, however, that in religious practice a certain tradition developed which for representing the person of the Buddha only employed a certain number of particularly characteristic symbolic forms easily appealing to the imagination of the faithful. These were specially the lotus, the wheel, the sunshade, and the stūpa which we discussed before as symbols of the Tree. So these symbols do not represent the Buddha in the manner indicated by Foucher, *i.e.* as an elementary representation of the circumstances or the locality in which a certain act performed by the Buddha took place. On the contrary, they represent the Buddha in the most direct and unmistakable manner, or rather, they are the Buddha himself.

The origin of the Buddha-image. Second stage

The centuries just before and after the beginning of our era have witnessed, as we know, the commencement of various forms of divine worship which may be summed up in the word *bhakti*. This worship implied *pūjā* and this pūjā was rendered to the gods and addressed to the divine figures now present in human form, the same which before, as trees, had been the recipients of devotion by the faithful.[158]

he is away preaching the Dharma elsewhere. The Buddha asks how many kinds of hallows (*chetiya*) there are. "Three", says Ānanda, with implied reference to contemporary non-Buddhist usage, "viz., those of the body *(śārīraka)*, those of association *(pāribhogaka)*, and those prescribed *(uddesika)*". The Buddha rejects the use of bodily relics on the obvious ground that such relics can only be venerated after the Parinibbāna. He rejects the 'prescribed' symbols also because such are 'groundless and merely fanciful'..., that is to say only artificially and by convention referable to the absent being for whom a substitute is desired... So "Only a Mahābodhirukkha, Great-Wisdom-tree, that has been associated with a Buddha is fit to be a *cetiya*, whether the Buddha be still living, or Absolutely Extinguished". (Spacing mine — B.)

[158] On this pūjā J. Przyluski in "Totémisme et végétalisme dans l'Inde", *Rev. de l'Hist. des Rel.*, XCVI (1927), p. 360, has the following remark: "Les dieux sont des dieux

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It must have been in this period that not only the real tree-spirits, the yaksha and the nāga, took on an anthropomorphic form, but that also the chief gods of the various sects of Buddhists, Jainas, Śivaites, Vishṇuites etc., identified with tree-spirits and followed by gods of humbler rank, were for the first time represented in human form. The chief moment in this anthropomorphizing process must have been that the stem of the Tree assumed the form of a human body, the body of the tree-spirit worshipped as a god, which transformation was accompanied by the assimilations and adaptations required for the transformation of the remaining parts of the tree into parts of the human body.

As the propensity to give the divinity a human form probably was felt simultaneously by the various sects, at least manifested itself in a limited space of time, it is not surprising that the style of the oldest images, no matter whether they represented yakshas, nāgas, the Buddha, or the chief gods of the Jainas, Śivaites and Vishṇuites, shows a high degree of uniformity. And we also understand that these images show some characteristics strongly reminiscent of, and easily explained by, their vegetal origin.

Tree-spirit, nāga and Buddha

With the help of a series of pictures we shall now endeavour to get a clearer insight into the manner in which the tree-spirit developed into the anthropomorphic nāga on the one hand, and into the human Buddha-figure on the other. Subsequently we shall try the same with regard to the tree-spirit, the yaksha and the Buddha-figure.

First of all, I refer to the Bharhut-relief on Pl. 70*a* showing three nāga-figures, placed in a medallion, wherein the two outer figures show the twisting lower part of a snake's body and the upper part of a female body, the central figure a man in a standing position. A striking feature in this relief are the five cobra-heads over the head of the central figure, for, unlike the usual manner in which those heads are pictured, they do not form a hood, but appear as the five-branched top

végétaux et plus particulièrement des dieux-arbres; ils sont informes ou plutôt ils ont grossièrement la forme d'un tronc d'arbre et il serait absurde de leur offrir à manger: un tronc d'arbre ne saurait absorber aucune viande crue ou cuite; tout ce qu'on peut faire est de l'arroser et de l'orner: on le peindra de belles couleurs; on le frottera de pâtes onctueues; on l'arrosera de liquides nourriciers ou rafraîchissants; on y suspendra des guirlandes dont le parfum aura pour effet d'écarter les influences pernicieuses. C'est en somme la *pūjā* indienne. Elle se relie à des spéculations très anciennes sur la nature des dieux et l'origine des êtres." Cf also Charpentier, "Ueber den Begriff und die Etymologie von pūjā," *Festgabe Jacobi*, 1916, p. 288 ff.

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of the tree which is seen emerging from behind the body, or out of the head, of the nāga-figure.[159]

The meaning of this is obvious. In a graphic manner we are shown the transformation of the tree-spirit into the nāga: the tree-stem has been transformed into the upright human body, the brahmamūla into the head of the nāga-figure, whilst the five-branched top has been given the form of a five-headed cobra-hood.

From the above it follows that just as the theriomorphic nāga can be explained from a part of the Tree-organism, so the anthropomorphic nāga may be traced to a part of the same organism: In the former case the lotus-stalk with the node provided the vegetal prototype (p. 137), whilst in the latter case the stem with its three-, five- or nine-branched top appears to have given birth to the nāga-body and its three-, five- or nine-fold hood.

It is very remarkable that from the latter vegetal Basic Form not only the nāga-body developed but also a type of Buddha-image characterized by the possession of a hood of cobra-heads.

In order to demonstrate this, I first draw the attention to the curious small bronze image of Chinese make shown on Pl. 70*b*. The most conspicuous feature of it is the central part which, as indicated by the lotus-cushion on which it is placed, is to be considered an object of worship. But whereas everywhere else this object is an image, the image of a deity, we find it here replaced by an object of such a vague and fantastic shape that we are at a loss how to describe it. It looks either like the massive stump of a tree with branches sprouting on either side, or the misshapen trunk of a human body with raised arms and its head sunk into the shoulders, or again like a rather realistic phallus except that it is provided with a pair of unnatural projections.

Although no doubt the object was intended to represent these things individually and jointly, this being no objection for the maker who thought symbolically — witness the cyclic transition of tree, human figure and liṅga-stambha (p. 151), — one of those meanings in any case strongly dominates, *viz.* the tree-stem. This is shown by the two side-branches mentioned above but also by the seven branches emerging from the top of the object which spread their twigs and leaves over a wide front and are each crowned by a standing or sitting Buddha-figure. A similar representation consisting of a conic top bearing a figure, in this case a

[159] Vogel rightly remarks on this relief (*Serpent Lore*, p. 39): "The Nāga is distinguished by the usual five-fold serpent-crest, but here the five snake-heads stand so wide apart as almost to present the appearance of a tree."

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bodhisattva on his vāhana, forms the top of the two side-branches of the tree-stump.

The seven branches springing from the top of the tree-stump are morphologically very interesting. This will appear after we have made a brief survey of the successive stages in the development connected with the Chinese piece and linking tree-spirit and Buddha-image.

The small figure on Pl. 70*c*, also of Chinese origin, shows the tree-stem which is replaced by the trunk of a sitting Buddha-figure, whilst, just as in the previous case, seven branches topped by Buddhas emerge from the head.

Closely related to this representation is a small modern Siamese image of a sitting Buddha from whose head also sprouts vegetation (Pl. 70*d*). The latter has been made simpler and appears as a single, bare, pointed branch surrounded by four side-branches bent outward.[160]

A next stage in the evolution is represented in the Siamese bronze on Pl. 70*e*. Here again are seven branches but now they do not sprout from the top but from the back and shoulders of the Buddha-figure, forming a set of projections with crotchety extremities in which the shapes of nāga-heads are clearly discernible.

Finally, the branches change into serpent-bodies and their extremities into real nāga-heads whilst the latter form the well-known hood of cobra-heads over the head of the sitting or standing Buddha-figure.

It is at this stage of development that the Muchilinda-type of Buddha-figure appears.[161] But not only the Buddha has been represented in this way. The same Muchilinda-type may be found with the images of numerous gods of higher or lower rank, belonging to the Śivaite, the Vishṇuite or the Jainist pantheon. So images showing the nāga-head-hood are known of Vishṇu-Anantaśāyin, Śiva-Dakshiṇamūrti, Śiva-Rikheśvara, Pārśva-nātha, Vaikantha-Nārāyaṇa, Kāla-Bhairava, Baladeva, and the twin gods Rāhu-Ketu (Pl. 72).[162]

[160] Grünwedel, *Mythologie*, Abb. 103, and A. J. Bernet Kempers, *The Bronzes of Nālandā*, fig. 2 give more examples of sitting Buddha- or Bodhisattva-figures with one or more branches of the bodhi-tree emerging from the head. Cf. the picture of Śiva-Dakshiṇamūrti with a tree-top growing from the jaṭāmakuṭa in Rao, *Elements*, I, 2, pl. LXXI and LXXIX.

[161] According to Bachhofer, *Die frühind. Plastik* (1929), p. 117, this type which spread from South-India over Ceylon and all Further India originated in Mathurā.

[162] Sastri, *S.I. Images*, Pl. 35, 51, 56, 98, 134, 145, 153. On the appearance side by side of Buddhist and non-Buddhist figures of the Muchilinda-type Coomaraswamy in *The Origin*, p. 24, remarks: "The Buddha and Jina type of a seated or standing figure, sheltered by the expanded hood of a polycephalous Nāga and the similar Hindu type (Viṣṇu-Anantaçāyin) present a common interest. Here... it would be usual to derive

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I mention in this connection the very instructive South-Indian Vaishṇava-prabhā-toraṇa illustrated in fig. 20.[163] The lower part of this piece is of the architectural throne-back-type with the usual *vyālaka* rearing upon an elephant. The upper part is of the makara-toraṇa-type while the the crown of the arch is a kīrtimukha. The most important part, however, lies in the axis which shows the stem of a tree splitting up in three pairs of branches and bearing on its summit a five-hooded cobra. If we imagine the image of the god Vishṇu to be placed in front of the back-piece, then the god's upright body coincides with the tree-stem, being identified with it, whilst the head of the god takes the place of the brahmamūla and the five-hooded cobra that of the five-branched tree-top.

What do the above images tell us about the origin of the Buddha-figure? The answer, in brief, is the following.

In the first stage of evolution the figure of the sacred ficus, aśvattha or nyagrodha, or of the symbolical substitutes of these trees is an adequate means of materializing the presence of the Tathāgata in the eyes of the faithful (oldest period of art: reliefs of Bharhut, Sānchi, etc.).

Next comes the period in which amongst the faithful the need is felt to represent the gods anthropomorphically. In this stage the tree-stem changes into the body and the brahmamūla into the head of a human being, whilst the many-branched top preserves its vegetal nature but springs not from the mūla but from the human head and spreads out fanwise over it. These stages are illustrated on 70.

Finally, the branches of the tree-top change into nāga-bodies, the extremities into nāga-heads, and the familiar cobra-hood appears over the head of the sitting or standing figure. At this point the evolution proceeds in two directions, on the one hand we find the nāga-figure in an anthropomorphic form (Pl. 71*a*, *b*), on the other hand the group of gods with heads hooded by a nāga-head to which belong not only the Buddha-image of the Muchilinda-type, but also Hindu deities like Vishṇu-Anantaśāyin, Śiva-Dakshiṇamūrti, etc. (Pl. 72).[164]

the Hindu from the Buddhist type; but the reverse is more probably. At any rate the Mahābhārata story of Rāja Adi in which the sleeping Droṇa is found sheltered by a serpent's hood is older than any possible Buddha figure." The author evidently overlooked the possibility that both types of images developed from a common prototype: the tree-spirit.

[163] Coomaraswamy, *Cat. of the Ind. Coll. in the Boston Museum*, 1923, p. 120 and Pl. LIX.

[164] This interpretation obviously is based on the assumption that the Buddha-image with nāga-hood, and *a fortiori* that crowned with the tree-top, represent the primary stage, the Muchilinda-story being a later invention induced by the desire to provide a rational explanation of the nāga-form of the Buddha-image which was no longer understood.

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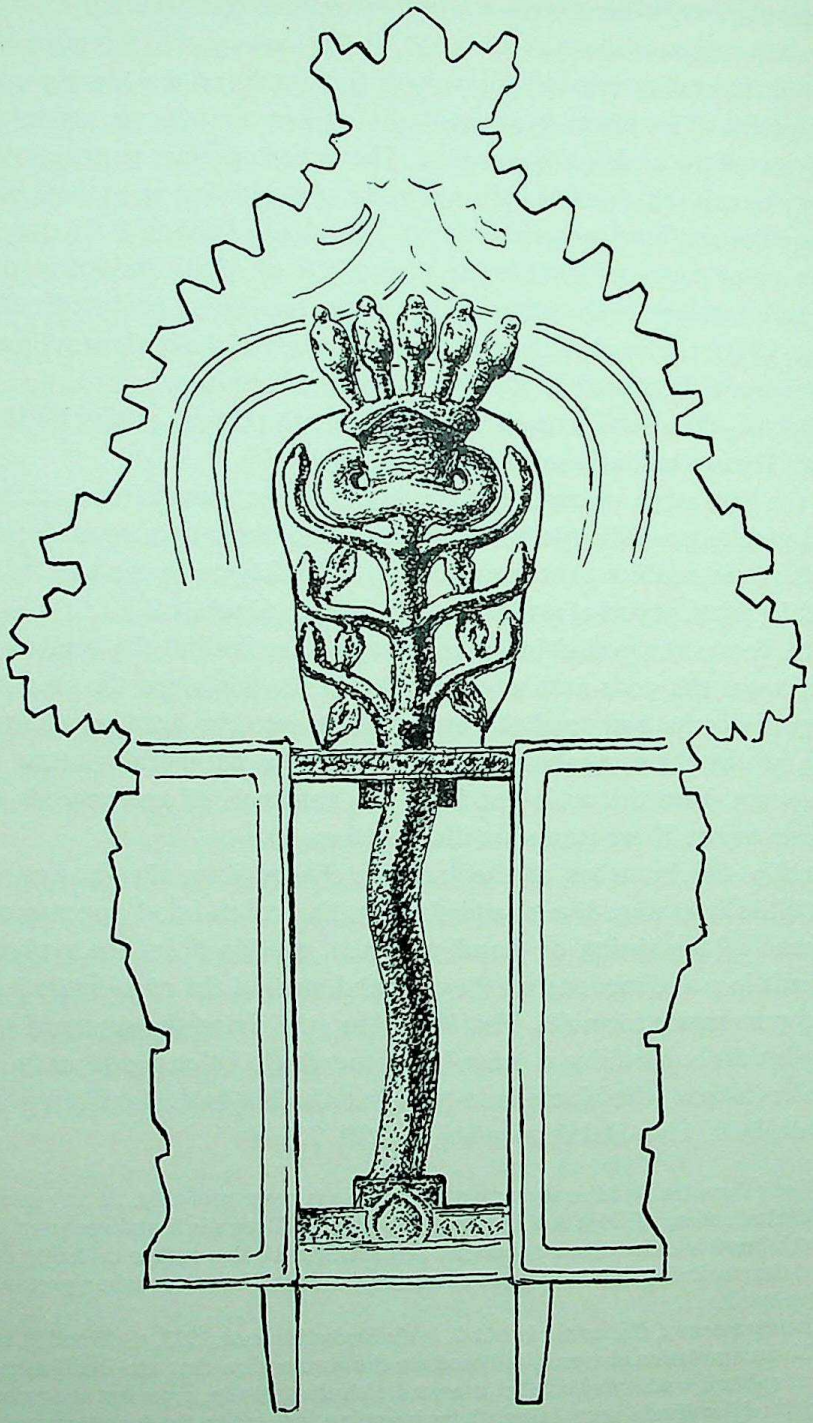

Fig. 20

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Tree-spirit, yaksha and Buddha

The relation between tree-spirit, yaksha and Buddha probably corresponded with that between tree-spirit, nāga and Buddha, but to demonstrate this we do not have such convincing indications as in the case of the nāga. A characteristic like the nāga-hood serving as 'tertium comparationis' between yaksha and Buddha is not available, and the Buddha-image, moreover, from the very beginning was subject to influences causing it to differ considerably from the image of its demoniacal counterpart.

All the same, literature provides us with various facts pointing to the clear notion, once prevailing in India, that the figures of Buddha and yaksha were closely associated. The following story from the life of the Buddha is a striking illustration of this association.[165]

A young woman by the name of Sujātā had made a vow that each year she would bring an offering to a banyan-tree if she should be given a spouse worthy of her station in life and a son as her first born. On the occasion of an offering being due again, the bodhisattva had sat down under the bodhi-tree, and when Sujātā's maid-servant who had been sent in advance approached the tree the brilliant apparition she saw there led her to believe that the tree-spirit had descended in person to receive the oblation. Full of excitement she hurried back to tell her mistress of her experience. Sujātā then went herself to the tree to present her offering consisting of a rich milk-rice served in a golden bowl, but she, too, thought that she was in the presence of the spirit of the banyan-tree. Thereupon she gave the bowl to the supposed yaksha and retreated without perceiving with whom she had been dealing.

This story is instructive as it shows that the figure of the yaksha and that of the Buddha were generally believed to resemble each other to the extent of being mistaken the one for the other and so causing a delusion, as was experienced by Sujātā and her maid.

Another example is taken from the Divyāvadāna. The 77th chapter relates how Māra was once forced by Upagupta, the Buddha's favourite pupil, to appear in the likeness of the Buddha. Upagupta then bowed down to pay homage to this apparition whereupon Māra objected to this adoration of himself.[166]

So this story, too, confronts us with a yaksha, here the yaksha Māra, who appears in the guise of the Buddha and so acts as his double.

[165] H. Kern, *Manuel of Ind. Buddhism*, p. 19.
[166] Coomaraswamy, *The Origin*, p. 42.

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With regard to the striking stylistic resemblance between the oldest detached Buddha-figures and the likewise detached yaksha-images to which Coomaraswamy was the first to draw the attention and which was referred to on p. 194, we could only do justice to this phenomenon after a full examination of the whole complicated problem of the origin and the development of the Buddha-image. As this would lead us too far, I shall have to content myself with suggesting the probability that in this case, too, the anthropomorphizing of the tree-spirit followed two courses resulting on the one hand in the human form of the yaksha, on the other in the Buddha-image of the yaksha-type. This would justify the conclusion that the one type did not emerge from the other, as was assumed by Coomaraswamy and others, but that they are related as two brothers, sons of the same paternal tree-spirit.

The following sketch summarizes our above remarks on the various lines of development starting from tree and tree-spirit.

First stage

Tree

|

The Buddha represented by a symbol
(Bharhut, Sānchi, etc.)

Second stage

anthropomorphous nāga-figure	Buddha in nāga-form (Muchilinda-type)	other deities in nāga-form (Muchilinda-type)	yaksha	Buddha in yaksha-form	other deities in yaksha-form

The process of anthropomorphizing

In the preceding paragraph we have examined the gradual evolution starting from the tree-spirit and finishing at the point where various gods are represented in human form. We now proceed to study the various obstacles which presented themselves and had to be overcome in the course of this process.

There is no doubt that here the Indian was faced by a problem of the first magnitude which he approached and sought to master in various ways. He had to bridge the gap between two units which, though widely

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different by nature and appearance, had to be assimilated and made into a conceivable, depictable and acceptable unity: on the one hand the sharply outlined and narrowly detailed scheme of the Basic Form which had only a limited adaptability, on the other hand the human body, that also by nature shows a strictly defined outline not suitable for much remodeling without a strain on the imagination.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the Indian resorted to various compromises in which now the figure of the tree or its symbols, now the human frame predominated, and that often he had recourse to daring solutions which in western eyes belong to the most fantastic, queer, and absurd creations human imagination ever conceived.

Although we need not attempt to follow and check the Indian in all his endeavours to adjust the tree-motif to the human body or inversely, a few cases lend themselves to further investigation.

Ekapāda-representations

Whereas in the identification of the human trunk with the tree-stem no serious problems had to be faced, real difficulties were met in the process of assimilating the head and the limbs of the human figure with the corresponding parts of the Basic Form, owing to the fact that the dominating feature of the stem-element is its representation of The One and, consequently, is always thought of as a solid undivided column, a feature that could hardly be reconciled with the fact that the lowest part of the human body, the continuation of the trunk downward, is bifurcate by nature.

There were obviously two conflicting notions here and it is interesting to observe how mythology or iconography solved the problem by an expedient both simple and effective: the two legs were made into one.

Such is the case with Aja Ekapād, the 'uniped billy-goat', a mythical figure whose appearance goes back to Vedic times, *i.e.* the period in which anthropomorphous images of deities were unknown and existed only in the imagination. Aja Ekapād, as we know, is mentioned in Vedic literature[167] in enumerations of celestial and atmospheric gods, from which it has been concluded that some or other natural phenomenon located in the heavens or the atmosphere was ment.[168]

All the same, one of the most positive statements about the Uniped is

[167] Macdonell, *Ved. Myth.*, p. 73 f. Keith, *Rel. of the Veda*, p. 137. Przyluski, "Deux noms" p. 457. Przyluski, "Unipèdes." *Etudes ind. et chin.*, II (1932-3), pp. 307-332.

[168] Roth and Grassman regard Aja Ekapād as a storm-spirit, Hardy as a lunar god, Macdonell and Keith as the lightning, Victor Henri, Bloomfield and more recently

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the epitheton *divo dharto* 'supporter of the sky' given him in RV, X 65, 18. This information is scanty but adequate: the goat is a fiery animal closely associated with the god Agni and frequently identified with him, specially in Vedic literature. Particularly the black-spotted goat comes in for this identification.[169] As Agni, or his black-spotted column of fire, is often identified with the cosmic pillar or the stem of the cosmic tree, it is only natural that the black-spotted goat, congenial with him, also appears in the form of cosmic pillar. The feature of being a uniped, then, is the immediate result of this appearance, for just as being undivided is the characteristic feature of the pillar, so the goat needed a similar characteristic on account of its pillar function.

Epic poetry offers a parallel. It is said of Sūrya that he is composed of two parts, a visible part radiating light, and a dark invisible part called the leg *(pāda)*. Through the latter, the sun for eight months sucks up water which subsequently during four months descends on the earth (Mbh. VIII 79, 78; XII 363, 5 f.).[170] Except for the last feature this idea is based on the same conception as Aja Ekapād. Like the latter, Sūrya has only one leg which, however, has absorbed the whole human trunk and, being so transformed into one tall pillar, has been identified with the stambha-solar standard.

As there exists a close relation between the yaksha and the anthropomorphous figure of the cosmic pillar, we are duly prepared to find the yaksha-figure among the group of Ekapāda-representations. It is Kalmāshapāda, the cannibal giant whose exploits and conversion are the subject of the well-known Sutasoma-legend.[171] His membership of this group is indicated first of all by his name, 'the black-footed' or 'the black-rayed' one, indicating the same characteristic which in the epic is attributed to Sūrya. *Kalmāsha* also means 'black-spotted' which asso-

Dumont as a solar deity. See Macdonell, *Ved. Myth.*, p. 74, and L. Dumont, *JAOS*, 53 (1933), p. 326. According to Bergaigne, *Rel. véd.* III, p. 20, *aja* in this compound means 'the unborn', i.e. 'he who has no parents'. Curiously, Aja Ekapād in the RV is five times addressed together with Ahi Budhnya 'the snake from the deep', a figure just as unexplained as Aja Ekapād himself. Yet the fact that this snake is said to have been born from the waters and to dwell in the deep suggests that it is the macrocosmic counterpart of the Devī Kuṇḍalinī, the snake dwelling in the lowermost body-cavity (supra p. 91) and closely associated with the stambha of the microcosm.

[169] Oldenberg, *Rel. d. Veda*, p. 78.

[170] Hopkins, *Epic Myth.*, p. 85.

[171] H. Kern, "Kalmāṣapāda en Sutasoma", *Verspr. Geschr.*, III, p. 146. Cf. Heine-Geldern, "Über Kris-Griffe und ihre myth. Grundlagen", *OAZ*, NS, VIII, p. 256 ff. and "Eine Scene aus dem Sutasoma-Jātaka auf hinterind. und ind. Schwertgriffen", *IPEK*, I, 1925, p. 198 ff.

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ciates the oger both with Agni and the black-spotted goat. The most important link with the uniped family, however, is a rather inconspicuous feature in the story according to the version in the Jayadissa-jātaka relating how Kalmāshapāda once, when trying to escape his pursuers, hurt himself on a pole with the result that he had to release his prey and dropped it at the foot of a banyan.[172] This reveals that Kalmāshapāda was a cripple and had only one leg at his disposal which again stresses his resemblance with both the above-mentioned beings whose stambha-nature implied their being uniped.

Iconography brings out the uniped-motif even more graphically than literature. I mention in this connection in the first place the Ekapādamūrti of Śiva (Pl. 73*a*, *b*). The trunk and the upper part of the body of this mūrti have their natural appearance but the lower part consists in one leg resting on one foot whilst from the hips or the knee-joints on either side Brahmā and Vishṇu emerge half-way through. This makes a kind of human candelabrum on a pedestal showing a marked resemblance to the types of lamps, incense-burners, and statuaries we discussed before (p. 121, 170).[173]

It is noteworthy that the Ekapādamūrti of Śiva gave rise to a corresponding form of ascetic practice, in a similar manner as the sthāṇumūrti of the same god (vide p. 187) originated the sthāṇu-vrata.

According to the following description by Campbell Oman[174] the above practice is part of a particular form of sun-worship. "Not far from the Shahalmi gate of Lahore city, — so the author tells us, — outside the walls, are some fine peepul trees (aśvatthas). About the foot of one of these a circular earthen platform had been constructed about three feet above the ground-level, with rude steps leading up to it . . . An . . . ascetic was standing on one leg facing the trunk of the tree, his head enveloped in a loose cloth resembling a napkin, and his face uplifted towards the sun, which was shining through the branches of the tree . . . The man standing on one leg was going through certain devotions. In his left hand he held a bag containing a rosary, and, with his right inserted in the bag, he counted his beads while he muttered certain prayers or prescribed formulas . . . The sadhu now poured out three shells full of water before the idol (of Ramachandra), made certain obeisances, and went to the other side of the tree. There, again on one leg, and facing the bright unclouded sun, he muttered his prayers to the great luminary. At

[172] Kern, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
[173] According to Hopkins, *Epic Myth.*, p. 85, an Ekapādamūrti of Vishṇu is also known.
[174] *The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India*, 1905, p. 231 ff.

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first he held one hand outstretched towards Surya; then he entwined the fingers of the two hands together in strange ways; next held his hands, with palms opposed towards the sun-god; and, lastly, extended both his hands appealingly towards the grand object of his worship. Uttering some Sanskrit words in a loud voice, he brought his devotions to an end by a libation of a conch full of water to the sun."

The meaning of this ritual is for the greater part lost upon us, but the chief feature seems to be that the sādhu standing on one leg forms a stambha and so identifies himself with the stem of the aśvattha in whose proximity he goes through his devotions and there awaits the moment that Sūrya reaching the zenith becomes visible through the foliage and forms the top of the stambha or cosmic pillar. At that moment the sādhu is identical with Sūrya himself, that means with the god's ekapādamūrti with which his vrata has united him.

Equivalents of the brahmamūla

So far we have dealt only with the lower part of the human frame and with the expedients in mythology and iconography to make this correspond with the stambha-element as well as possible. Meanwhile, in respect of the head and the arms similar obstacles were encountered as in the case of the legs because here, too, there was the difficult problem how to adapt these parts to definite parts of the Tree-motif to which they bear but little resemblance. In the case of the Ekapāda-type only one expedient was available — fusing the two legs into one — but with the head and arms various ways of adjustment were possible which, each in its turn and at the proper time, have been realized in art.

One of these solutions we have met already when discussing the Ekapādamūrti of Śiva. The identification of the uniped's lower part of this image with the tree-stem justifies the conclusion that the place where the body splits in three trunks coincides with the brahmamūla and, therefore, the upper halves of the three bodies correspond with the three branches of the tree. The abdomen on Pl. 73 is therefore the equivalent of the brahmamūla.

But this is an exceptional case, and a repetition of it will be hard to find. As a rule the place of identification is situated much higher. As far is we can see, three cases present themselves here.

1) The whole of the human body, from head to foot, has been identified with the stambha. As in this case there is no equivalent of the brahmamūla, in order to make a complete resemblance with the Basic Form, an artificial mūla has been created, mostly by placing over the

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head of the god the familiar monster-head-symbol either with or without the makara-toraṇa .This monster-head should, therefore, not be thought of as being detached from the image underneath it. Both form a unity, the kāla-head being incomplete without the human column supporting it just as the column is incomplete without the top-piece.

2) The whole body has been identified with the stambha with the exception of the protuberance on the skull, the knot of hair, or the top of the crown, in which case one of these objects appears in the function of the brahmamūla.

An interesting example of this solution is to be found on the Barabuḍur-relief of the second gallery (Pl. 20) picturing the meeting between the merchant's son Sudhana with the Dravidian Megha,[175] the latter being represented in a sitting position under a bodhi-tree. The remarkable thing about this picture is that the artist placed the round top of Megha's crown in the very spot where the tree's round brahmamūla is situated, covering the latter and hiding it from view. This may seem a trivial detail but to us this coinciding of top and mūla is significant in that it demonstrates the identity of both objects and so provides the desired link between human body on the one hand and the tree-organism on the other.

3) The body up to and including the neck takes the stambha's place whilst the head is identified with the brahmamūla and the arms with the lateral branches of the Tree-motif. This no doubt is the most current, and for that matter the most obvious solution, placing the cases mentioned above in the position of rather rare exceptions to the general rule.

The identification of the human head with the brahmamūla is perhaps nowhere demonstrated so distinctly as on the vidyādhara relief-scenes of the chaṇḍi Meṇḍut (Pl. 74, 75). According to Brandes[176] these reliefs are filled up with tendril and flower ornament, and Krom voices a similar opinion when he speaks of "human figures surrounded by tendrils and flowers".[177] On closer examination we observe, however, that this vegetation does more than just provide an elegant filling for the panel. The point is that it emerges from the vidhyādhara's body in the shape of a number of tendril-bundles, the first two of which spring from the base, this part of the body being identified with the padmamūla, (or viewed microcosmically, the mūlādhāra, cf. p. 91 f.), whilst the second pair proceeds from either side of the head, conferring on this part of the body a similar function as that of the brahmamūla when it produces vegetation on both sides (Pl. 74).

[175] Krom, *Barabuḍur*, I, II, p. 32.
[176] *ROC*, 1913, p. 32.
[177] *Inleiding*, I, p. 299.

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This relief picture then reveals that the tree-spirit in human form, far from belying its original nature, manifests it by sprouting flower-stalks and tendrils. The trunk takes the place of the tree-stem whilst anus and head, being the base and the top of the trunk, figure as the stem-bearing padmamūla and the stem-topping brahmamūla.

The other vidyādhara relief, shown on Pl. 75, is a variation of the theme we just discussed. Here the tendrils springing from the head and the base are absent, but the sculptor, as if to make up for this deficiency, made a complete celestial tree with four side-branches rising from the head of the kneeling figure.

The identification of the human trunk with the stambha and of the head with the brahmamūla has provided an inexhaustible source for creating new designs including the weirdest and most fantastic ones. This is not surprising considering the fact that the mūla lent itself for substitution not only by the customary symbols of the actual mūla but also by the various symbolic appearances of the sun, the celestial body which, as I submitted before (p. 143), under certain circumstances occupies the mūla's place. This explains a number of representations showing trunk and limbs in human form but in place of the head one or other solar symbol. Examples of this evolution are: if the mūla is replaced by a lion's or monster's head: the Narasiṃhāvatāra of Vishṇu; by a bull's head: Yamāntaka and other demoniacal deities from the Tantric pantheon; by a horse's head: Dadhyañch, Vishṇu-Nārāyaṇa, the Aśvins and Hayagrīva.

Fresh complications may present themselves if the bipartite basic form of the brahmamūla has been the starting-point (p. 120) and one of the parts or both have been subjected to symbolic transformation. Finally, besides this bipartite form there is still a four-fold one whose counterpart among the padmamūla variations we met before (p. 124).

The latter form provides us with an explanation of the numerous symbolic representations which, though widely different in aspect and meaning, have a common characteristic in being composed of an upright element with a supporting function and a four- or five-fold top.

A typical illustration of this group is the liṅga of chaṇḍi Sukuh showing the still unexplained characteristic that round the *glans* of the otherwise very realistic phallus four big balls have been placed crosswise (Pl. 76*b*). The obvious explanation is that in this picture the phallus replaces the stambha, the *glans* the brahmamūla, and the four balls correspond with the four bulb-shaped protuberances which are supposed to be grouped round the central part of the fourfold brahmamūla.

We are justified in applying the same interpretation to representations

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in which the stem has been replaced by the human body, a pillar, or a tower, whilst the four protuberances have assumed the form of human heads or faces. These transformations, then, give birth to the god Brahmā and other gods with four heads or faces, and also to such heterogeneous objects as the top of the Nepal stūpa, the towers and entrance gates of the Bayon, and a four-headed liṅga pictured on a bas-relief at Pahārpur (Pl. 76*a*, *c*, *d*).

In all these representations we meet again the stambha with its fourfold mūla-top, although these elements have been symbolized in widely different ways.

Balinese chatuḥkāya-images

In conclusion we shall dwell a moment on a remarkable example of the human head being replaced by a symbolic figure.

Among the archaeological discoveries on Bali by Stutterheim are two objects, probably dating from the Middle-Balinese period (13th-14th century) and found in the *pura* Kebo Edan near Pejeng. The finder had every reason to call them "the strangest and most mysterious images ever found on Java or Bali", "grotesque and nightmarish."[178] Referring to the pictures on Pl. 76*e* I draw the attention to the fact that the head of each of the four yaksha-figures composing the group is no real head but has been replaced, in the words of Stutterheim, "by a big mask, somewhat like a shield to which a smaller similar shield has been attached, the latter bearing again a still smaller rectangular shield with round angles, on the left and right side flanked by an ear-shaped square appendix and having a tridental figure hanging from the base. Over this mask rise two points bent inward, one bigger than the other. There is no trace of eyes, nose or mouth".

The other image at Kebo Edan is a single figure, much bigger than the other (over two meters high) and shows the same mask-like cover over the face. According to Stutterheim[179] this mask is "more oval and ends on either side in horn-like projections unequal in length and curling inward. Against this big mask a small or rectangular specimen has been placed".

What could be the meaning of these weird representations? When Stutterheim was faced with this question he rightly associated the 'mask' both with the kāla-motif and the śrī-character. He says: "The ornament... found with the four-fold image in the centre of the mask resembles strongly what Brandes once called the 'monocle-motif' consisting of the

[178] *Oudheden van Bali* (Antiquities of B.), I (1929), p. 164.
[179] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

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usual kāla-head motif simplified in such a way that only one eye seems to be present. None the less, I believe the śrī-figure, too, to have been incorporated into the kāla-symbol . . . The application of this symbol is independent of the actual śrī-figure and operates with an ease that can only be explained by the auspicious, or rather evil-averting, character of the symbol."

These remarks point in the direction of the desired interpretation. We have only to compare the śrī-figure on Pl. 35*g* with the mask-like covering of the face to notice the marked resemblance between the two. For the rest, it is not strange that the masks also show something of the kāla-motif as both kāla and śrī-figure originate from the same mūla-element.

The key-stone of our interpretation is now easily found. We appear to be dealing once more with a case of replacement of the human head, the natural top of the trunk-stambha, by a mūla-symbol. As the śrī-character, as we know, may assume this part (p. 117 f.), the sculptor was from the iconographic point of view quite justified in replacing the yaksha-head by this character.

I shall have to pass by the symbolic forms which are based on the five-branched tree-top and its component parts since we cannot deal with them without getting involved in a number of complicated problems — *e.g.* that of the Buddha's three kāyas and that of the various systems of Jinas or Dhyānibuddhas — which would bring us far beyond the scope of our present examination. I only mention, as a matter of general orientation, that the centre-branch of the top represents a replica of the stem, placed as it were on a higher level, and so is suitable for substitution by the usual stem-symbols. If for instance the branch is replaced by a liṅga, the stem-element by a human trunk, and the brahmamūla by a head, there appears the image of a god or a royal person with a cylindric liṅga-like protuberance on the makuṭa, a representation we meet both in iconography and in epigraphy.[180] See particularly the ancient Balinese ornament on Pl. 51*e*, the central part of which consists in a brahmamūla in the form of a one-eyed monster-head whilst the top represents the centre-branch of the top changed into a liṅga.

A number of variations on this theme are possible, for instance that in which the centre-branch appears as a god, whilst the stambha-top

[180] L. Finot, *BEFEO*, IV (1904), p. 92: "... ce liṅga ... fut porté sur la tête de tous les rois." See also J. L. Moens, "Hindu-Javaansche portretbeelden", *TBG*, LVIII (1918), p. 499; F. D. K. Bosch, "Oudheden te Koetei", *OV*, 1925, p. 137; W. F. Stutterheim, *Oudheden van Bali*, p. 110 and Pl. 4.

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assumes the form of an animal, the symbolic manifestation of the brahmamūla or of the sun (cf. p. 143), in which case there appears a god standing or seated on the shoulders of his vehicle.

Another evolution is effected when the four, eight or sixteen side-branches of the Basic Form are involved in the symbolizing process and change into figures of gods forming with the deity of the centre-branch — often also with the deities placed on a lower level — a *maṇḍala*.

I cannot go into further details here, but from the above remarks it is clear that the top is no less important than the other component parts of the Tree, and that further examination of this symbolism no doubt would bring interesting results, particularly in the field of iconography.

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V

THE CULT-IMAGE

Vegetative properties of the cult-image

The question in what manner the Tree-organism developed into the cult-image has, I believe, now been duly elucidated. This does not imply that this evolution should have been cleared up in all its details. Far from it. I fully realize that the obstacles in the process of adaptation and identification, only some of which have been examined a little closer, have produced an abundance and a variety of expedients that baffle the imagination. But we need to call a halt somewhere, and I believe that we now have reached that stage. From now on we shall assume the evolution to be an accomplished fact, giving way to a period of rest and of equilibrium in which definite iconographical forms were materialized, forms that, at a future date, were bound to be canonized in śilpaśāstras and so rendered immune against fresh developments.

The remaining question is, whether in these stabilized forms, as we find them in art, certain characteristics survive reminiscent of the vegetal origin of the cult-image and whether, generally speaking, that image does not acquire a different aspect if the living human being it is supposed to represent is conceived in its vegetal nature, that means as an organism through whose veins flows vegetal sap instead of blood and that behaves accordingly.

We shall therefore study some parts of the cult-image in order to examine their vegetal nature.

Arm and hand

The identification of the human body with a tree or a plant results not only in the identification of the trunk with the stem and of the head with the brahmamūla but it also made the Indian look for a set of the plant's organs suitable for identification with the arms. Obviously, the only appropriate parts were the two side-branches springing from the brahma-

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mūla. True, the points where arms and this vegetation are implanted do not correspond exactly, as the plant lacks the counterparts of neck and shoulders, but if this was an obstacle at all, it was readily ignored. This identification is directly associated with the familiar comparisons in Indian literature of the human arm with the lotus-rhizome and its side-branches, both being frequently praised for their smoothness, roundness and plumpness.

Another reflex of this identification is to be found in the 67th lakshaṇa of the Buddha which according to the Nepal list is *pīnāyata-bhujalatatā,* in Burnouf's translation[1] "la qualité d'avoir les bras pleins et longs", to which the author adds: "Le texte dit positivement 'la liane des bras' d'apres un système de comparaison familier aux Indiens."

In the case of 'identification through a concealed third' (p. 102) the arm may also be compared with the nāga and the elephant's trunk. Number 19 of the Singhalese list, according to Burnouf: "la qualité d'avoir les bras et les cuisses comme la trompe de l'éléfant", shows that this representation, too, was given a place amongst the lakshaṇas.[2]

If we proceed a little further on this road of comparison and identification, it becomes understandable that the identification of side-branch and arm was bound to lead to the identification of the bundle of shoots proceeding fan-wise from the extremity of the branch with the outspread fingers of the human hand, or, in case these shoots have the appearance of a hood of cobra-heads (p. 137), to the identification of nāga body, nāga breast and hood with arm, palm and fingers. This explains the comparison in the epic (Nalopākhyāna, V, 5) of the human arm, hand and fingers with a five-headed nāga, and it is no mere coincidence, then, that in plastic art the five-headed nāga has a striking resemblance to the human hand (pl. 47*a*, *b*).

The case is different when from the extremity of the branch originates a single flower-stalk instead of the fan-shaped bundle of shoots. If the extremity now changes into a hand it results in a representation as found on the Tibetan picture in Pl. 77*c*. The Bhaishajyaguru pictured there carries the characteristic lotus-emblem in his hand, but whereas elsewhere the flower-stalk is held between finger and thumb or by the entire hand, the stalk here is clearly seen to rise from the outward-bent palm.[3]

[1] Burnouf, *Le lotus de la bonne foi*, p. 613.
[2] *Ibid.* Cf. *KSS*, 55, 48 where a kings's arms are compared with an elephant's trunk, and *KSS*, 52, 121 comparing the trunk with a lotus-stalk.
[3] Another clear example is to be found in the Bhaishajyaguru on p. 114 of Grünwedel's *Mythologie*.

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So the human hand appears to have been represented as a kind of vegetal organ producing the stalk (cf. also Pl. 77*a, b*).

Nonetheless, even if under certain circumstances the natural arm with its hand could be compared and identified with the side-branch of the lotus-rhizome with its shoots, the fact remains that in Indian eyes these parts of the body can have been but poor objects for a comparison with the parts of the plant mentioned. With the abundant branching, which in nature is such a prominent feature of the extremity of the lotus-rhizome, the outspread fingers of the human hand correspond but inadequately; and the comparison was even less satisfactory when the cosmic plant had been conceived as a tree, which drew forth the identification of the fingers with branches that fell short in all respects. We can well understand that the Indian, in an attempt to raise the partial resemblance between the objects compared to a complete similarity, did not hesitate to improve on nature by investing the human arm with the faculty of branching. This made it possible to have two or more arms, even quite a bundle of them, emerge from the elbow or the arm-pit and so to create an equivalent of the fan-shaped bundle of branches.

It remains to be seen whether this new interpretation of the many-armed form of Indian gods is valid in all cases. In particular I regard it as doubtful whether it could be applied to the oldest images on which the number of unnatural arms has been limited to one set. Be that as it may, even if the origin of the many-armed forms of these figures has been a different one, it remains probable that the existing tendency towards this kind of many-armed representation was considerably enhanced by Tree-symbolism. And how this symbolism gained the upperhand is nowhere so clearly demonstrated as in certain monster-figures in the Tantric pantheon. The demoniacal deity in Pl. 79*b* whose stem-like trunk produces a bundle of outspread arms like so many branches, cannot fail to give the impression that in the creation of these figures the many-branched lord of the wood, *vanaspati,* served as a model.

The attributes of the gods

Following our above remarks on the hand of the god we now briefly discuss the object in the hand, the emblem or attribute.

Let us first recall the well-known Bharhut-reliefs (Pl. 4*a-c*) showing the lotus-rhizome producing from its nodes a number of side-branches which in their turn produce garments, ornaments and jewels, taking the place occupied on other reliefs by all kinds of fruit or bunches of fruits. Evidently, these objects stand on a par with the fruits and have, therefore, been

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conceived not as inanimate objects but as participating in the life of the plant.

As the human hand, as we remarked before, may take over the plant's function insofar as it is capable of producing a flower-stalk (p. 217), it is clear that the representation of the hand with stalk, the latter bearing an attribute in the shape of a precious object, is virtually the same as that of the Bharhut-reliefs. In either case the fruit or the object is supposed to have originated from a vegetable organ.

When, finally, the stalk as a link between the hand and the attribute disappears, making the attribute emerge directly from the hand, the hand becomes the bearer and at the same time the producer, the place of germination, of the divine attribute.

The cult-image as a wishing-tree

After reviewing these metamorphoses we shall now dwell briefly on the Indian vision on the cult-image as a bearer of attributes.

The cult-image, then, presents itself as a wishing-tree in human form. The trunk of the god represents the stem of the Tree, the head the brahmamūla, and the arms the side-branches, whilst, in case the god appears in a many-armed form, the arms emerging from the elbow or the arm-pit correspond with a more or less voluminous bundle of branches. Not only in their outward appearance, however, the image and the cosmic tree are each other's counterpart. Their inner natures also correspond. Just as the plant's sap has the miraculous property of prolonging and invigorating life, of spreading health and prosperity, and producing earthly treasures and other precious things which hang as ripened fruit from its branches, so the fluid of life flowing through the Tree in human form, the cult-image, is able to produce all valuable things that are essential for the sustenance, the happiness and the prosperity of mankind, to cause them to 'ripen' in its extended hands, and to give them the form of attributes and emblems which the god bestows as precious gifts on his worshippers.

If in this manner the image of the god is conceived as a cosmic Tree in human form, then we may take the next step of associating this representation with a subject we discussed before (p. 83 ff.).

I pointed out on that occasion that the Tree-motif is at the base of a system of classification dividing all that exists — living beings and inanimate objects, properties, natural phenomena, activities, professions, parts of the body, etc. — in two large groups, the members of which, taken in pairs, are each other's opposite and so have been placed on

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either side of the axis of the system, the stem of the Tree, facing each other, on the right hand the figures connected with the male creative principle and on the left those connected with the female principle.

If on the basis of this system of classification we examine more closely the attributes in the pairs of hands of divine images, it strikes us that a certain regularity, a sort of system, can be discovered. Generally speaking, the objects that are considered to be male, being pointed, straight, sharp, hot, or luminous, are held in the right hands, whereas the left hands hold the female opposites such as hollow, bent, cool, and dark objects. As an illustration I mention: right the arrow, left the bow; right the vajra, left the ghaṇṭā; right the sacrificial knife, left the skull-bowl; right the sword, left the book (connected with 'the Word', Vāch, and the Waters), right the Sun, left the Moon; also on the left all sorts of plants and flowers, amongst which the lotus.

There is no doubt that in the distribution of the attributes over the various pairs of hands a certain system has been followed, but it is equally certain that with a great number of images of gods, both in the Hindu and in the Buddhist pantheon, the system has repeatedly been discarded. This is only natural considering the fact that, apart from the many factors which during the two-thousand years of evolution of the Indian pantheon exerted their disturbing influence on the system, besides the twofold classification system a fourfold conception has been in use that in many respects must have caused a disruption of the basis of the former (cf. p. 89). Under these circumstances it certainly is more a matter of surprise that so much of the system has persisted than that not still more of it has survived.

The lotus-style

Finally, in connection with the foregoing discussion I shall call the attention to another matter of considerable importance.

It is common knowledge that the Indian aesthetic ideal as it finds expression in art greatly differs from the western conception of corporeal beauty moulded on the classical pattern. Whereas the Greeks, and the renaissance artists in their train, aimed at the perfect type of beauty by a reproduction of the human body that is true to nature and anatomically correct, the Indians, in violent contrast with the former, created figures of gods characterized not only by an abnormal number of limbs but also by a rotund, soft and plump physique. The latter peculiarity drew the attention of the western world at an early date and gave rise to various attempts at explaining this contrast with time-honoured classical stand-

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ards in a rational way. That serious mistakes were made in this early stage was unavoidable. So, for instance, the imperfections in the anatomical treatment by Indian sculptors were attributed by Moor to "the frequent bathing and rubbing with ointment which effeminates the lines of the body",[4] by Erskine to "the endless number of symbols whose application prevents the artist from rising to higher levels".[5] In view of the then very limited knowledge of oriental art we can hardly indict these authors as being behind the times.

More surprising is the comment of Grünwedel, the eminent connoisseur of Indian art, when he says[6]: "The shoulders loaded with broad chains, the arms and legs covered with metal rings, the bodies encircled with richly linked girdles, could never have attained an anatomically correct form. Everywhere the carrying out of a clear outline was interfered with by broad ornamental lines, rich and tasteful in themselves, disturbing the natural position of the muscles of the leg and arm, and, in consequence, the limbs have received at the best an effeminate, seemingly correct, finish".

Havell was one of the first to oppose views of this kind. This ardent admirer of oriental art in all its expressions, particularly of its aesthetic qualities, wrote[7]: "It is impossible to believe that artists, who showed such a beautiful feeling for line and form, and such remarkable executive powers as are evident in the best Indian sculpture, always failed, by some curious lapse of artistic perception, in the very ordinary imitative qualities necessary for a completely accurate modelling of the muscular system of the human body. Indian art, in every other branch, has solved the highest technical difficulties. Why, then, should we assume incompetence in this one respect? It is surely much more logical . . . to conclude that they purposely suppressed the details of the physical body with the intention of suggesting the inner Self, purified and exalted by communion with the Universal Soul." And elsewhere[8]: "The Indian artist . . . would create a higher and more subtle type than a Grecian athlete or a Roman senator, and suggest that spiritual beauty which, according to his philosophy, can only be reached by the surrender of wordly attachments and the suppres-

[4] C. J. C. Reuvens, "Verhandeling over drie groote steenen beelden in den jare 1819 uit Java naar de Nederlanden overgezonden" (Essay on three big stone images sent from Java to the Netherlands in the year 1819), *Gedenkschriften Kon. Nederl. Inst. van Wetenschappen*, III (1826), pp. 152 ff.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 153.

[6] *Buddhist Art in India*, p. 32.

[7] *Ind. Sculpture and Painting*, 1908, p. 35 f.

[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

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sion of wordly desires. Indian art is essentially idealistic, mystic, symbolic, and transcendental. The artist is both priest and poet . . . Indian art appeals only to the imagination, and strives to realise the spirituality and abstraction of a supra-terrestial sphere."

The view expressed in these words met with general approval and even became an axiom to the extent that since Havell's time the softness of the Indian human figures, once deemed an eye-sore, came to be regarded as a mark of excellence, being the natural result of the spiritualization of art and proof of its supernatural beauty.

Closer investigation, however, will make it clear that Havell's explanation, much as it is applicable to the vast group of individuals like saints, monks, ascetes, bodhisattvas, Buddhas and suchlike for whom spiritual qualities rather than physical strength are essential, falls short when the figures of heroes, royal persons and deities are concerned. When these and their equals in literature and in inscriptions are praised for being strong as a lion, brave in battle, ruthless slayers of enemies, in short are endowed with all essentially male virtues, why then, we ask, are they pictured in art in the same soft and unmanly manner as is deemed suitable for the group of spiritual persons?

Havell failed to answer this question, and it is doubtful whether an answer can ever be found along the lines suggested by him. We shall have to take a different course, a course that is clearly indicated by the whole of our preceding examination. To put it briefly: it is lotus-symbolism that left its lasting mark on art. A few words will be sufficient to demonstrate this.

When we discussed the Buddha's marks of beauty, we noticed that in literature the smoothness, rotundity and plumpness of the various parts of the Tathāgata's body are repeatedly emphasized. In expressions like *susaṃvṛittaskandaḥ*, 'with purely round shoulders', *suvartitoruḥ*, 'with purely round shanks', *suparimṛishṭagātraḥ*, 'with smooth limbs all round', *vṛittakukshiḥ*, 'with round sides', and suchlike[9] the favourite verb is *vṛit*, 'to turn', 'to rotate', 'to roll', and the associated participle *(su) vṛitta*, '(purely) round', 'cylindrical', denoting the forms pre-eminently characteristic for the lotus-stalk. The same idea is explicitly expressed in the texts. Number 67 of the Nepalese list mentions as a lakshaṇa the 'lotus-stalk of the long and plump arms', and no. 19 speaks of 'arms like an elephant's trunk' (identification through a concealed third). The latter comparison is also found in a śilpaśāstra rule[10]: "the limbs of divine figures should

[9] Burnouf, *op. cit.*, p. 594, 598.
[10] Hadaway, "Some Hindu silpasastras in their relation to South-Ind. sculpture", *OAZ*, III (1914-15), p. 48.

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resemble an elephant's trunk". It is not a little remarkable that this very rule was widely applied in artistic practice: one look at the reliefs of the Barabuḍur and the chaṇḍi Prambanan is sufficient to convince us that no object is so well suited for comparison with the limbs of the figures there depicted as the round, inarticulate, tapering trunk. of the elephant

Moreover, if we recall the alaṃkāras, well-known in Indian poetical language, expressing again and again in varying forms the same theme of the resemblance between human limbs and lotus-stalks and between the human face and an open lotus-flower, there is every reason to assume that this sort of figurative speech has a deeper meaning than the authors who unwittingly employed it ever realized. This meaning is to be found in the universal and deep-rooted notion that regards the human body as the microcosmic counterpart of the cosmic lotus-plant.

What is in this respect the part of plastic art?

From the outset it has been an obedient interpreter of the above-mentioned idea by having the human figure, whether it harboured a saint or a hero, a brahman or a royal person, a human or a divine being, correspond with the ideal picture of the lotus-plant with its soft, smooth, plump and female lines that served the artist as a model (Pl. 78*a-c*). It gave rise to what may be called the 'lotus-style', the style which both in space and in time extended further than any other form of art, for in spite of its great specialization and its widely varying ways of expression, there always remained the one original lotus-style, prevailing from Aśoka's time till the present day, spreading over the whole east and southeast Asiatic continent, from the Chinese and Mongolian frontiers in the north down to Ceylon in the south, from Afghanistan in the west to Cambodia and Champa in the east, and continuing its march of conquest into the Japanese and Indonesian islands.

The vanaspati-style

Though it spread over such a vast area and was dominant for many centuries, the lotus-style never gained the upperhand, not through inadequacy but because its nature was not monopolistic. The figure of the terrestrial lotus-plant ever had the figure of the celestial fig-tree for its counterpart, and just as the former was destined to leave its mark on a certain style, so the latter could not fail to exert its influence on the representation of certain groups of figures. In doing so it is obvious that both styles brought out the polar contrast between the Soma and Agni aspect of things just as markedly as the two cosmic plants. So, if the lotus-style figures were characterized by elegance and softness, feminity, and charm of lines, those

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of the vanaspati-style had to express the compactness, massiveness, ruggedness, and wild demoniac nature that characterize the Indian lord of the woods (Pls. 79 and 80).

The various traditional types of human figures were distributed between these two types, but not before important shiftings in their spheres of influence had taken place. Whereas the opening stages of plastic art show a marked preference for the lord-of-the-wood style, revealed by the fact that the most ancient anthropomorphic representations of tree-spirits, including the Buddha, all show the yaksha-type (p. 194), in later periods this style had to give ground considerably. This is shown not only by the fact that at an early date the Buddha-figure is adapted to the lotus-style standard, but also by the number and the importance of the other human figures which were pictured in each of the two styles. Finally, the dividing line runs between an extensive group of gods and other figures adopting the lotus-style and a small category of demoniacal beings in which the old yaksha-type survived.

In Central Java the situation is much the same. Whether we look at Buddhist or at Hindu sculpture, at the relief-scenes of the Barabuḍur or of the chaṇḍi Prambanan, everywhere the figures of the lotus-style are predominant as compared with the insignificant number of demoniacal beings, such as gods in their *krodha*-manifestation, yakshas, rākshasas as gatekeepers, and so on.

The situation changes considerably in East Java and on Bali. Not only do the figures of the demon type on the reliefs have a far more important part than ever before, in literature, too, there are distinct signs of their ever-increasing influence.[11] This is not the place to demonstrate this by means of descriptions of conflicts between gods and demons,

[11] The importance of the lord-of-the-wood type in East Javanese and Balinese art is also clearly demonstrated in its use as a kris-handle. As we know, the handle of the Javanese and the Balinese kris mostly represent a yaksha or bhūta. This figure is on a fitting place here for if the kris is placed in a standard of the kind mentioned before (p. 150), then the straight or bent blade is the equivalent of the straight stem or the twisted stalk of the lotus, whilst the handle corresponds with the celestial tree, the vanaspati or lord of the woods, implanted on the stem and personated by the yaksha or bhūta. In the most original types of handle, closest to the prototype, this yaksha or bhūta appears as a real tree-spirit, i.e. as a knotty, amorph tree-stem overgrown by lianes and other vegetation which form gradually develops into more human figures. The vegetal kind of handle is called in Javanese *tunggak semi* 'budding tree-stump' and according to tradition was invented by Sunan Bonang, one of the nine Islam apostles on Java. (Cf. *Babad Tanah Djawi*, ed. 1941, p. 31, and Rouffaer-Juynboll, *De batikkunst in Ned. Ind.* (1900-1914), p. 482, 527). This development is quite in contrast with that described for the handles on our Pl. 82 *c*, *d* by N. J. Krom in "L'art javanais dans les Musées de Hollande et de Java", *Ars Asiatica*, VIII, p. 72, in the following words:

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heroes and giants, in which both parties appear as equals and are more or less on a par as to numbers and strength. I only mention an East Javanese text whose importance was realized and pointed out before but which is worth referring to again in this connection. I mean the Bubuksha.[12]

This text, still popular on Bali, relates how two brothers, Bubuksha *i.e.*, 'Glutton' and Gagang-aking *i.e.* 'Withered Stem', in their youth go to live as hermits on mount Wilis with the object of attaining supreme wisdom. Each has his own method: the first one eats everything edible, even animal and human beings caught in his snares, the other diets on a bare minimum of vegetable fare. This causes a rupture as they cannot persuade each other and stick to their own way of living. After a while Śiva sends to them the god Kalawijaya in the likeness of a white tiger to put them to the test and so find out which of the two chose the right path. The tiger appears saying that he wants to eat human flesh. Gagang-aking replies that it would not be worth the tiger's while to eat him as he is thin and emaciated, and refers the animal to his brother who has done himself well. Bubuksha appears at once to be prepared to being devoured and so shows to be *tyāga* and a real saint. The tiger then takes him on its back up to heaven leaving Gagang-aking to follow on foot. Bubuksha receives for his reward the highest heaven, whereas his brother has to be content with a humble share in the celestial joys.

This story, the first part of which is particularly important for our purpose, shows the two brothers as representing the two opposing primeval forces in nature which divide the universe.[13] Bubuksha, the

'Les deux poignées..., toutes deux en ivoire, sont d'excellents spécimens de la gradation ornementale où excellaient les artistes javanais de l'antiquité et dont le sentiment ne s'est point perdu chez eux des temps modernes. La figure de gauche (i.e. in our Pl. 82 the right-hand figure) représente un rākshasa ainsi que l'indiquent les traits du visage et les défenses. Le visage est encore tout à fait naturel pour autant que ce qualificatif soit applicable à un rākshasa; par contre les cheveux sur le devant du crâne et le corps commencent à se résoudre en ornement. A droite (in our Pl. 82 left) cette évolution s'est accomplie; dans les parties où l'on s'attend à voir les yeux, le nez et la bouche, on peut deviner les éléments fondamentaux de cette figure, mais l'ornement l'a complètement envahie..."

The same erroneous description may be found in Heine-Geldern, "Über Kris-Griffe und ihre myth. Grundlagen," *OAZ*, NS, VIII, p. 364.

The Balinese sculpture on Pl. 82*a* is a curious variation on the above theme of the kris-handle: here the blade has been replaced by a wooden post, whereas the bhūta, but in this case depicted in a very human shape, has kept his place on the stambha-top.

[12] W. H. Rassers, "Çiva en Buddha in de Archipel", *Gedenkschr. Kon. Inst.*, 1926, p. 230. The following résumé is borrowed from this study.

[13] According to the *Tantu Panggelaran* (ed. Pigeaud, p. 243), they were the sons of Teken Wulung who being endowed with magic power brought civilisation from India to Java.

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glutton, directed by his vrata to eat everything, like the omnivorous Agni *(sarvabhuj)*, has the nature of fire and belongs to the demoniacal type. He spends his time with hunting and tapping palm-wine. His abode is east of mount Wilis. His brother, on the other hand, Gagang-aking or 'Withered Stem', diets on plants. He has the nature of the waters and is related to the lotus. He makes a living of agriculture and lives west of mount Wilis.

This contrast has been strikingly illustrated on the chaṇḍi Surawana-relief (Pl. 81) showing the two brothers sitting on either side of a tree that divides the panel in two. On the right-hand side of the stem, *i.e.* on the spectator's left or on the Agni-side, we see Bubuksha pictured, as we expected, robust and compact and representing the lord-of-the-wood style, whilst on the left or the Soma-side we observe Gagang-aking, a graceful and slender figure and a worthy representative of the lotus-style.

Whereas the Bubuksha story and the Surawana-relief clearly express the idea that the exponents of the two great cosmic powers, reflected in the style of their figures, are related as two brothers, of opposite nature and properties it is true, but claiming equal shares in 'lebensraum', the same applies, to a still higher degree, to a product of the Javanese mind which, though modern in the sense of being still as popular as ever, belongs to the oldest Indian inheritance of the Javanese people.

In the wayang or shadow-play — for this is what I have in mind — the equilibrium between the Agni and Soma groups is completely restored. According to a fixed, never varying division of the wayang puppets in a so-called left and right group[14] all characters of the 'brute' type, characterized by their robust and coarse physique (Pl 80*a*, *b*) are grouped together to the left of the *ḍalang* (producer of the play), *i.e.* heraldically to the right, whilst to the right, *i.e.* heraldically to the left, an equal number of 'noble' figures have been drawn up represented by a wayang variety of the lotus-style, which is best characterized by the name of the elder of the two brothers 'Withered Stem'.

So we find here, just as in the case of the Surawana-relief but in a far more striking arrangement, the co-equal representatives of the two cosmic primeval forces drawn up in sharp contrast: on the right or Agni-Bubuksha side the lord-of-the-wood types, on the left or Soma-Gagang-aking side the lotus-style figures.

Apart from this arrangement, there is another striking resemblance between the relief-scene and the shadow-play. Just as in the former the

[14] W. H. Rassers, "Over den oorsprong van het Javaansche tooneel" (On the origin of the Jav. theatre), *BKI*, 88 (1931), p. 360.

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two brothers occupy a place on either side of a tree, so in the latter the two groups have been drawn up to the right and the left of a tree-figure.

Once more the gunungan

Our detour has brought us back to the *gunungan,* the wayang requisite, the exterior aspect of which we discussed at length before (p. 178 ff.) and whose symbolic meaning at this stage of our examination will stand out more distinctly.

We may put this question: does not the Tree being placed between the Agni and Soma groups of wayang-puppets express the idea that the opposing creative forces in nature, as represented by these groups, are essentially one, originating from the same root of life from which rises the Cosmic Tree that produces and sustains all creation? This root, as we saw before, is the receptacle of the golden amṛita-liquid for whose possession the two antagonistic forces wage deadly battle. But it is more. Although in Indian belief the course of the world is governed by the action of the pairs of opposites *(dvandvas)*; although human fate depends on it and all suffering in this world is caused by it, it is equally true that emancipation from the saṃsāra can be effected by breaking away from the dvandvas, and that the state of the *nirdvanda* is attainable for the soul that in *samādhi* rises above all passions and emotions and merges with the god who unites and harmonizes all discord and strife.

As Manu I, 26 has it: "When the seeker after salvation by suppressing his feelings becomes indifferent to everything, he acquires eternal bliss both here and in after-life. He who in this manner has broken all chains and struggled out of all pairs of opposites has found rest in Brahman."[15]

Or in the words of the well-known beautiful parable in Kaush. Up. I, 4: "Just as he who swiftly drives in a chariot looks down on the wheels, so the wise man looks down on day and night, good and bad works and on all other pairs of opposites. He, knowing Brahman, enters into Brahman."

Seen from this angle the gunungan represents to the initiated observer of the shadow-play the divine principle situated in the centre of the universe in which all the apparent contrasts of this world are annihilated, and merged into a higher unity. Transferred to terrestrial level, the figure therefore represents to the observer the point to which his *dhyāna* should be directed so that his soul in *samādhi* may obtain the salvation which results from the union with the divine principle.

This meaning of the gunungan is closely connected with another idea.

[15] Cf. *Mbh.* XIV, 19, 4 ff.; *Bṛihadar. Up.* IV, 3.

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If we notice that this tree-figure has its function in the staging of events belonging to a remote past and has a place amidst heroes living in that past and having been killed in the great battle on the Kurukshetra or on some other heroic occasion; and if we keep in mind that a constant feature of these stories is that the heroes, thus having died a violent death, are sprinkled with amṛita, contained in a special vase, by a god or a similar supernatural being and thereby rise from the dead and wake up to new life, the conclusion can only be that to the Javanese the Tree from whose root the amṛita originates and descends as a soft rain on the earth *(aśvatthaḥ somasavanaḥ)* had the same meaning as the amṛita vase and in his imagination played the part of a cosmically enlarged sprinkler of the elixir of life.

So, when at the beginning of the shadow-play the performer takes the gunungan from the banana-stem in which it had been stuck and flourishes it,[16] is not the original object of this seemingly insignificant act to handle the Tree-figure as a sprinkler of amṛita, in order that in the eyes of the spectators the hero-figures on either side of the gunungan should rise from the realm of death and that by means of this resurrection their glorious feats and exploits, their strife for the amṛita and their conquest of it, should be transferred from the remote past to the present time and place?

[16] Oetoyo *apud* Rassers, *op. cit.*, p. 400. Cf. McPhee, *Djâwâ*, 1936, p. 6: "When all the characters have finally been taken from the box, the stage is cleared of those which are to appear, and the rest remain huddled at either side, a strange and undecipherable forest of shadows. The kajon is now taken up and flourished; it is put through a series of fantastic evolutions, twirling, disappearing, reappearing and spinning in rhythmic sympathy with the music. Seen from behind the screen it takes on the nature of a mystic dance; the dalang sways back and forth, carried away by the ritual, and the musical accents seem to imbue the kajon with a mysterious life of its own." (kajon=gunungan).

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VI

FINAL REMARKS

Introduction

If we close our examination at this point and look back on the ground covered since we began our discussion of Indian symbolism, we shall do well to remember that we started from a hypothesis, *viz.* the possibility that the Basic Form, as we abstracted it from art, according to Indian belief, is at the root of all creation, that this form represents an eternally constant scheme of which Life availed itself to accomplish its creative work in nature. This form, so we presumed, could supply the key to an interpretation of the products of the mind reflecting the Indian idea of these acts of creation, both in the material and in the spiritual world.

Our next step was to compare a number of these products — works of art, myths, legends, and tales — with the Basic Form pplying the principles that rule the transfer of form and meaning of the component parts of the Basic Form to certain symbols or groups of symbols. This led us to the domain of symbolism in which we have since remained.

If we now assess the results of our work, we shall need to leave a wide margin for all sorts of errors on the author's part. I shall be the first to admit that secondary matters may have been mistaken for essentials, and, inversely, that relations were assumed that were non-existent or, what is worse, that relations were overlooked or wrongly interpreted, and all this through inadequate insight in or familiarity with a strange subject. Yet, if we have strayed from our course and sustained severe damage, nobody will allege that all the interpretations of artistic and literary phenomena presented by us were nothing but illusions. If there is any truth in the words: "L'hypothèse se prouve par tout ce qu'elle explique", I believe our hypothesis to have stood the test. In fact, if our impressions are more than self-delusion; if we have not been wholly misled by the spell of our own conceptions, then the number of phenomena explained by our hypothesis has not been inconsiderable. We even

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now and again were under the impression that there was no more need to go and apply the key of the Tree motif to unsolved problems, as these problems on their own accord seemed to present themselves as anxious to be unravelled.

The macrocosmos and the principle of life

If our hypothesis may be taken to have vindicated itself and in these closing remarks may once more serve as our guide, how is it related to other recent attempts to attribute the above-mentioned phenomena to one common source of causes? Are they conflicting or parallel, or are the different standpoints incompatible to the extent that from the outset all attempts at comparison are doomed?

I have particularly in mind the magnificent work Paul Mus has done with regard to the Barabuḍur, following up certain ideas on the construction and the meaning of this mighty monument which, shortly before him, were expressed by Stutterheim.

After closely following, improving and extending these ideas and making them the basis for his own theories, Mus in the later part of his work struck out for himself and covered the whole field of Mahāyānist-Buddhist religious doctrine. In doing so he constantly paid attention both to the older forms of Buddhism and the Hindu-systems, and to the literature of Brāhmaṇas and Sūtras. The latter in particular he indicated as the chief source of many representations hitherto regarded as purely Mahāyānist. In this way Mus not only shed new light on many obscurities of the religious system that, for Java and Sumatra too, has had such outstanding importance, but he also took the first steps in a new field of study which he aptly characterized as 'archéologie religieuse comparée'.

Within the scope of the present study we cannot do justice to a work with such a wealth of information and testifying to the author's wide reading and deep insight in the Indian mind. With regard to the subjects we are dealing with I only mention the fact that Mus sides with Stutterheim and Heine-Geldern who have sought for a solution of the current problems in the macrocosmos and, both literally and figuratively, have made the Mahāmeru the axis of their interpretation of the Indian conception of life and world.

This is best shown in the following words of Heine-Geldern:[1] "What is the meaning of this worship of mount Meru, the cosmic symbol, and

[1] "Weltbild und Bauform in Südostasien", *WBKKA*, IV, p. 73.

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so of the cosmos itself? What line of thought is it based on? Where are its historic roots? Is it too bold to speak of a real Meru religion, an unofficial and unrecognized religion, not even understood by its followers, which penetrated both Brahmanism and Buddhism, and at the same time permeated the spiritual life of Javanese and Malay Moslems? Here the outlines stay out dimly of a 'Universism' which, even though only relics or rudimentary beginnings come into play here, should be made the subject of future research"

Heine-Geldern was certainly right in assuming a 'Universism' and a 'Religion' in the sense quoted. And he was equally right to place the Mahāmeru in the centre of these two coinciding systems. To a great extent we share his views, but on a critical point our paths diverge. In his theory the Indian world-conception is based on the macrocosmic system, a system which to the western mind appears as mechanically governed and built up from inanimate material. In contrast with this I take the view that this macrocosmic system in its turn is rooted in an even older and deeper soil; that it is the expression of a system not built up of lifeless matter but inspired from within by Life itself. It is the organism of the Cosmic Tree of Life which set the example to all creation and left its mark on the conception of the greatest and most sublime of all things created, the macrocosmos (p. 95 ff.).

This shifts the primordial source of all that exists to the deepest origin of all things, the Golden Germ, born of the obscure womb of the waters by the operation of Brahman's creative breath, the divine principle that ever was the heart and centre of both the 'Universism' and the 'Religion' meant by Heine-Geldern.

Religious values

Our next question is: If it is true that the Indian world-conception was derived not from a system built up out of lifeless material but modelled after a living organism, and that in the centre of this conception the principle of life, one with the divine principle, was established, what, then, is the place of the individual man in this cosmology? What is his relation to the divine? What religious values had the system to offer him?

To find a reply to these questions we turn once more, and now for the last time, to the Bharhut-reliefs.

Pl. 4*b* shows us a number of scenes succeeding each other from left to right, and framed by the upwards- and downwards-bent curves of the lotus rootstock which, in the course of the present study, have become so familiar to us. We observe a jātaka followed by a big flower with a

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bird on it, an elephant, a big bunch of fruit, an animal, another piece of fruit, and various other scenes, all joined to the rhizome by means of side-branches springing from the parvans.

There is, I believe, little doubt that these scenes represent the successive stages of human life in the saṃsāra. Not only the eloquent representations of various rebirths as men and as animals, but the bunches of fruit, too, clearly express the artist's intention. They represent the *phala,* the fruit that, according to an over-familiar metaphor, is produced by every life, and the nature of which determines the form of existence in which this life will reappear when it proceeds on its dreary journey through the saṃsāra.[2]

This representation, adapted to the conception of the macrocosm, calls up betore the mind the *saṃsāravṛiksha,* the tree of rebirths, referred to in Śaṅkara's commentary on Bhag. Gītā XV, 1-3 and Kāṭh. Up. VI, 1. This tree is no other than the Cosmic Tree we met before, having the Meru for its root, the summit of this mountain for its stem, whose top is like the sky it supports, and whose wide-spread branches, filling the universe with their twigs, leaves, flowers and fruit, give birth to all creatures thriving on the tree's sap.

Now man is one of these creatures. He is born of the Cosmic Tree and is fed by it. By the working of his karma he is destined — as the Bharhut-reliefs so graphically show us — to wander aimlessly within the twisting curves of one of its numerous branches, to drag out his life through the saṃsāra from one birth to the next, now as a man, now as a demon, next time as an animal, till finally the great light shall dawn upon him and a doctrine of deliverance shall teach him that he is of the essence of the divine power, rising from the root of the Tree, and show him the road to deliverance from the saṃsāra.

This deliverance is different for the various doctrines, but at the root of all is the principle that man, after acquiring true insight, must follow the direct route to the One, the supreme deity, identical with the stem of the Tree. For the Śivaites this deity is Śiva, for the Vishṇuites Vishṇu, whilst in the Mahāyāna the Buddha takes the place of the Cosmic Pillar. Other

[2] In preparing the Dutch edition of this book I had not yet noticed that the same idea had already occurred to Benimadhab Barua in his work *Barhut* (Calcutta, 1934). In Vol. III, p. 44 he wrote: "The jātaka-scenes and the fruit, flower and other ornamental compositions alternating with each other are not without significance of their own. The former represent the nature of the effort made, and the latter the nature of the fruition obtained." (Cp. also Vol. I, p. 101). In his recension of Barua's work, *BEFEO,* XXXVII, p. 549, Sir John Marshall rejected this interpretation as being too hazardous "Une telle interprétation d'un motif aussi courant... dépasse à mon avis l'intention du sculpteur." On the contrary, I think it is in complete harmony with it.

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systems know a more elevated goal: the jīvātman's desire is to ascend to the empyreum, the sphere in which the highest top of the Tree dissolves in space, the sphere of pure light and knowledge in which the supreme Brahman- or Ādibuddha-principle sits enthroned, alone and inaccessible. So the author of the Bhagavad Gītā saw it: "The inexhaustible Aśvattha has its roots above, its branches below . . . He who knows it knows the Vedas. Upwards and downwards extend its branches . . . And downwards to this human world are continued its roots which lead on to action. Its form is not thus known here, nor its end, nor its beginning, nor its support . . . Those who are free from pride and delusion, who have overcome the evils of attachment, who are constant in contemplating the relation of the supreme and individual self, from whom desire has parted, who are free from the pairs of opposites called pleasure and pain, go undeluded to that imperishable seat. The sun does not light it, nor the moon, nor fire. That is my highest abode, going to which none returns . . . Thus, o sinless one, have I proclaimed this most mysterious science. He who knows this, has done all he need do, and he becomes possessed of discernment."

Meanwhile, we should bear in mind that the macrocosm is not the only system in which the Basic Form manifests itself. It is but one of numerous similar systems although it is the most sublime and for man the most important. To those systems, as we have seen, belong by nature all living beings and inanimate objects that, by their shape or their inner qualities or by both, express their identity with the plan of creation established once for all in the Basic Form. They are as it were tuned in the same key. How easily they harmonize!

We now repeat our above question: what is the relation between man and each of those beings and objects? Is it a religious relation, too, and if so, how is it expressed?

Obviously, this relation is different from that between man and the macrocosm. He is not a living part of them as he is of the latter, he is not grown together with them like a fruit with its tree, but to a certain degree he is independent of them. Yet with each of them he shares one factor of paramount importance in that either participate in Life, the divine principle ever self-consistent, irrespective of the variety and multiplicity of its forms. How great, however, is the difference as to quality and intensity by which this principle manifests itself in either! Man's life, as bitter experience has taught him, is frail and fleeting, subject to infirmity and old age and ending in death. On the other hand, the same life is highly manifest and active in the objects and beings whose identity

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with the Basic Form enables them both to absorb and to radiate the vital energy and so to serve as distributors, 'sprinklers', of amṛita, the elixir of life.

Need we wonder that under these circumstances man's relative independence of these objects and beings turns into complete dependence? That his sole salvation lies in subjection to their salutary, life-giving and life-prolonging powers, and that he wants them to surround him and accompany him on every footstep on life's road?

This being subjected to these influences is all-important not only to the life of the individual but also his family, his fields, cattle, hearth, and home thirst for the comfort of the same elixir. All these beings and all these things, mortal and frail as they are, can only withstand the ever-present dangers and misfortunes if constantly strengthened by the life-giving power of the amṛita.

In view of all this we no longer wonder at the Indians' endless — we might almost say senseless — repetition of the Tree-motif in religion, literature and art. The thousandfold needs of mankind, the satisfaction of all the necessaries of life and the fulfilment of all its wants and desires, all these call for multiplication and endless specialization of the surrounding sources of energy. There will never be a redundance of them, but a shortage would have immediate and disastrous consequences.

These are only general remarks that will help us to find an explanation for the endless repetition of the Tree-motif which at first seemed meaningless to us. But a number of questions remain: in what manner did Tree symbolism operate in Indian society, at what moments and under what circumstances should certain symbolical forms be applied, what was the meaning of each one of them, how could the immanent powers be activated, dosed or tempered? All these and similar problems must remain unsolved for the time being.

Our inability to gain an adequate insight in these matters is clearly shown if we attempt to bring our judgment to bear on certain religious objects based on the Tree-motif. We take for our example the Hindu-Javanese priest's bell and try to find out the ritual significance of the various types of emblems that alternately served as a top-piece for that object.

It is conjectured that the vajra-crowned bells were used by Buddhist priests, particularly those of the Vajradhara-sect, the chakra- and garuḍa-bells by the Vishṇuites, the nandin- and liṅga-bells by the Śivaites, and so on.[3] It has even been suggested that the bell with a Gaṇeśa top-piece was a

[3] *Djâwâ*, 1937, p. 38.

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particular feature of Gaṇeśa-worship. That this theory is untenable is clearly evidenced by the appearance on the Barabuḍur-reliefs of standards with 'Śivaite' and 'Vishṇuite' top-pieces carried in the train of royal persons whose Buddhist denomination was beyond doubt, whilst on the other hand on Bali both the Śivaite and the Buddhist priest know of only one kind of bell, the vajra-topped one.

In view of this we shall have to assume that, although various sects may have had their preference for certain emblems, most types of bells have been the joint property of all sects, which brings these objects on a level with the decorative motifs appearing on the buildings of all religious sects.

This does not imply, however, that the emblems in question should be no more than meaningless ornaments. There can be no doubt that the use of certain types of bells in rites and on ceremonial occasions, either by one priest on various occasions, or by various priests on the same occasion, revealed various differences in meaning closely connected with the special object of these ceremonies and the particular quality of the magic powers which the ritual was intended to conjure up. But, though the nature of these differences remains unknown, we may be sure that they did exist and were full of meaning to those for whom the language of symbolism was still a living vehicle.

There is no advantage in discussing once more from this angle the numerous other manifestations of the Tree-motif which we met in the course of our examination. It would be a mere recapitulation of familiar subjects that would not add to our knowledge of the meaning, the purpose, and the application of these manifestations.

Literature and Tree-symbolism

At this stage we should, however, ask ourselves whether our conclusions that so far mainly related to symbolical representations in the field of plastic art also apply to the legendary and mythical traditions some of which we made the object of our enquiry.

The answer is not difficult. To begin with, there is a vast group of narratives in which the figures involved — persons, plants, or objects — at a particular moment join in a situation which calls up before the mind of the listeners the image of a symbolic manifestation of the Tree-motif. This situation not only is the climax, the essence, the primary element of the narrative, its effect is also similar to that of any other symbol embodying the Tree-motif to which is attributed a life-giving and invigorating influence on its surroundings.

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Such a situation is created, for instance, when in the Kalmāshapāda-story the one-footed giant lifts the bodhisattva onto his shoulders, or when in the legend of Chullavagga 5, 8 the bamboo-pole crowned by an alms-bowl stands erect, or when in the Muchilinda-story the Buddha sits down under the hood of the nāgarāja, or when the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas meet in the Kurukshetra. The introduction to these situations or their dénouement is of little account and can be altered at will. The situation itself is all that matters. At the particular moment created by that situation, the elements of the narrative stand arranged in a way that calls up the image of the Tree-motif before the minds of the listeners and in that same moment the narrative is considered to produce all the beneficial influences inherent in that image.

Besides this kind of narrative whose close relation to the Tree-motif is evident, there is a vast category whose connection with that motif at first sight seems absent but is disclosed by plastic art. I have in mind the following.

It is well-known that the favourite form used by the Indians for framing collections of stories, in Winternitz's words[4] is the 'emboxing system' (Einschachtelung). A number of stories are arranged in a frame-story, and each of these stories may itself serve as a frame for one or more other stories.

In my opinion, we may characterize this system more closely, and more correctly, too, if we avoid terms like 'box' or 'frame', meant for inanimate objects, and look for an analogy taken from the realm of living nature.

This analogy is clearly seen if we follow from beginning to end a series of stories of the kind in question. We see, then, the main story with which the series opens follow its own course till the point where it gives birth to a second story. This story branches off and follows its own course until in its turn it brings forth a new story, and so on till this process comes to a stop, whereupon the main story proceeds on its interrupted course, only to produce sooner or later a new subsidiary story and present a repetition of the same process.

We hardly need to point out that the way of story-telling thus visualized closely resembles the kalpalatā of the relief-scenes; that the main story in the series corresponds with the main rhizome, and that just as the subsidiary stories at succeeding points originate from the main story, so the side-branches at succeeding nodes spring from the rhizome producing new stalks, and flowers.

If we were to attribute this correspondence to coincidence or to an optical

[4] *Geschichte der indischen Litt.*, III, (1920), p. 271.

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delusion, art would soon open our eyes. It shows us that it is quite common when depicting series of stories characterized by the 'kalpalatā' way of telling — such as the fable-collections of the Pañchatantra and the Hitopadeśa type — to place the scenes in question within the tendrils of a kalpalatā, in such a manner that each scene forms the centre of a spiral springing from a side-branch. So not only the frame but also the contents of the story and of the picture correspond: just as the fable-figures form the centres of the story-spiral, so they are the centres of each branch-spiral in plastic art.

What can be the meaning of all this?

The only explanation is that at the bottom of the kalpalatā of plastic art and of the kalpalatā in literature lies the idea that the *rasa* flowing through the kalpalatā's main stem, entering into the side-branches through the parvans and there producing leaves, flowers, fruits, animals, men, and other creatures, is the same fluid that proceeds through the main story, reaches the subsidiary stories and, inside the spirals thus made, gives birth to the figures of men and animals whose adventures are the theme of each of the story-spirals.

That this has more than merely formal importance is all too obvious. Just as the kalpalatā of the reliefs represents a symbolic manifestation of the Tree-motif which, pictured by the artist, was supposed to shed blessings on all whose eyes beheld his work, so the kalpalatā of literature, made audible in a series of legends or stories, must have poured forth life-prolonging and invigorating energy on all whose ears took in the spoken words.

Viewed in this light, it is no wonder that we often find in the titles of various works of poetry the names, or allusions to the names, of the kalpalatā, the kalpataru, or the amṛita (*e.g.* Amṛitalaharī, Kṛishṇāmṛita, Padyāmṛitataraṅginī, Rāsataraṅginī, Vedāntakalpataru, Vishṇubhakti-kalpalatā, Amarakośa, Bṛihatkathāmañjari, Śabdakalpadruma, Avadāna-kalpalatā).

Nor is it strange that the *śravaṇaphala,* literally the 'listening fruit', indicating the salutary influence of listening to a certain piece of poetry, is essentially the same as the beneficial powers attributed to the amṛita.[5]

Finally, it is worth noting that the name *parvan,* indicating the eighteen chapters of the Mahābhārata epic, is derived from the node or internode of the plant *par excellence,* the lotus, which makes us realize all the more the close relation between the kalpalatā as it was pictured and the kalpalatā as it was put into words.

[5] J. Gonda, "Ursprung und Wesen des ind. Dramas," *AO,* XIX (1943), p. 376.

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Tree-symbolism as a cultural factor

After our discussion of some important products of Indian literature we now face the question what share Tree-symbolism had in the development of Indian culture.

That this share has been considerable is equally certain as that it is impossible at the present moment to draw a clear outline of it. The vast extent of the ground we set out to cover, including religion, literature, and art, permitted only a partial examination, and so our journey could be little more than a reconnaisance.

It is needless to say that under these circumstances no true picture could be drawn of the value of Tree-symbolism as a factor in Indian culture and that any effort to do so would be like an attempt to map a continent of which only some coastal strips have been surveyed.

There is, however, a fact that may offset the tendency towards the reserve we have to observe when we are dealing with data not including the whole domain of the Indian mind. I mean that the idea at the bottom of Tree-sybmolism is a univeral idea tending to manifest itself in the same manner under all circumstances and in all the various fields of human knowledge and activity.

During our enquiry we ever had the same experience: after determining the outline of the Basic Form and the rules by which symbolism uses this form for its purposes, it appeared immaterial which ground we wished to cover or to which object we were to apply the rules. The same solution appeared to fit the problem, whether we were dealing with a tenet, a myth, or an object of art, whether we were examining a temple, a decorative motif, or the top-piece of a royal standard.

This experience gained in the course of our examination does not justify the supposition that the Tree-motif should be the magic wand by whose touch we could forthwith solve all problems appearing over the Indian horizon, but it does permit us to assume that its function, the ideas and the powers it produced, are everywhere and ever consistent.

If we now ask once more what Tree-symbolism has contributed to Indian culture, the chief point to be emphasized is the order that it creates all around it, the order that is inhering in it, just as chaos is inhering in the phenomenal world surrounding primeval man with a fearsome obsession.

This order rules supreme in the classification-system sprung from the Tree-motif, and grows into a mighty scheme that holds in its grasp all human ideas about creation, fashioning them into a harmonious whole

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by allotting to each pair of opposites which are at the foundation of creation their unalterable place in the organism of the cosmic Tree. In this world-conception confusion has no place because chaos has been banned for ever, as it has been replaced by sacred order, the Vedic ṛita.

Tree-symbolism creates order not only in the macrocosmic and the microcosmic worlds but also in the realm of invisible things, in that of religion and ritual, arts and sciences, in short, wherever the seed of this symbolism takes root it develops into an organism that absorbs existing representations, assimilates and subordinates them, or produces new representations until the image of the Tree is full-grown and each part, big or small, has found its natural place.

Truly, if human culture is characterized by close relation to the idea of order, then Tree-symbolism has been pre-eminently the factor to establish this order in Indian society.

Two problems

Before we close this discussion I wish to call the attention to two problems that by their vastness hide the things behind them from view. To disregard them would be as hard as to deny their existence.

The first one is connected with the extent of Tree symbolism in time and space.

When wandering through the fields of Indian art and literature, we took our illustrations from periods hundreds, even thousands, of years apart. Now it was the Veda, the epic, a myth, or a much later narrative, now a product of old Buddhist art, or an object of recent Balinese or Siamese make that brought us in contact with an application of Tree-symbolism. Acknowledging this amounts to accepting the astonishing and baffling phenomenon that, with regard to this symbolism, there was an uninterrupted tradition extending from the first settlement of Indians in the Panjāb till the present day (Pl. 83, 84).[6] This extension in time is crossed by an expansion in space just as amazing, for not only in India itself, but in all regions fecundated by the Indian stream of culture, Tree symbolism appears to have taken root and, independent of the mother-country, to have developed into an unparalleled wealth and variety of forms.

What to think of all this? How to explain these wonderful phenomena without coming in conflict with established facts?

A tempting expedient to this end is the suggestion, presenting itself first of all, that the uninterrupted influence of Tree symbolism is only

[6] For the latter I am obliged to professor F. B. J. Kuiper for drawing my attention to this modern Indian picture of the cosmic Tree.

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based on a delusion; the suggestion which holds that art, indeed, made use of that symbolism for many a century but only when it originated and shortly after was its significance fully realized, so that subsequent development was no more than a slavish and mechanical imitation of a venerable tradition not inspired by the deeper sense of symbolical forms.

The question we are facing here was also put by Brandes, in a somewhat similar form, at the close of his study of the Central Javanese wall-ornament in which he had recognized a variation of the triśūla-chakra-motif discussed on page 163 above. Is it possible, he asked, that the original meaning of a motif was still realized by the artist even when the transformation and the stylization of the motif had as far proceeded as in the case of the triśūla-chakra?[7]

Brandes' answer to this question resembles the suggestion formulated above. That answer, according to him, can only be in the negative, for there is no doubt that the vast mass of motifs, supposed to be symbolical, had outlived itself, had become a lifeless ornament at the time they were given a place in monumental art.

That Brandes' view, proclaimed so positively as the only correct one, is untenable, is demonstrated best by the very illustrations he adduces in support of that view. They have shown to us (p. 163) that in the Hindu-Javanese variations of the triśūla-chakra-motif just those elements have endured that formed the essential parts of the Basic Form and could not be missed without depriving that form of its symbolic character.

So we ask whether it is likely that the Hindu-Javanese artists could have designed those variations, reflecting such a clear understanding of the symbolism inherent in them, if they had not realized the deeper meaning of their work and had been actuated only by a tradition that at the moment they took up the chisel had outlived itself centuries ago?

If this illustration is not convincing, I may point to another one that demonstrates beyond doubt the untenability of Brandes' view.

When we discussed the various forms of the śrī-character (p. 117), I pointed out that nowhere but on Java the sign was valued as a mūla-symbol and that the various transformations applied to the syllable with the purpose of equalizing it to the mūla represent an autochthonous Javanese evolution.

In view of these facts we may no longer speak of a 'lifeless ornament' or a symbolism that had 'outlived itself'. It is clear enough that in this case —just as with the triśūla-chakra emblem and others—symbolism, far from being carried along as a useless burden, belonged to the living Hindu-

[7] "Hommage au Congrès des Orientalistes de Hanoi", 1902, p. 12.

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Javanese cultural assets and could provide the inspiration for creating the moulds for an original, specifically Hindu-Javanese art.

In rejecting Brandes' standpoint we barred the road to an all-too-easy solution of our problem and instead found a confirmation for our view that for centuries after Tree-symbolism reached its full growth — at least to well on in the Middle Ages — the basic representations had not lost their vital power. So we are still faced with the task of explaining how a tradition embodying these representations could be preserved for thousands of years, without, we may add, there being any trace of its having been set down in writing and in this permanent form having been enabled to weather the ages.

The problem cannot be solved without asking the preliminary question how the absence of all written tradition about symbolism is to be explained. In this connection, I recall the phenomenon referred to before (p. 47) that the Indian authors, as it were by mutual agreement, usually kept silent about the submerged parts of the lotus-plant or only covertly alluded to them. Whereas the visible parts, like stalks, leaves, buds, flowers, and fruit, were the favourite objects for poetic figurative language, tradition seemed to discountenance any kind of communicativeness with regard to the concealed organs, particularly the padmamūla and the parvans. The reticence in respect to these organs has even been so rigidly observed that we only own it to art that we have been able to form an adequate idea about their importance for symbolism.

It is this very reticence, however, that can provide us with a clue for an explanation of many features that now still seem mysterious. There are indications to the effect that with the mysterious abode in the womb of the waters were connected notions of darkness and death, terror and horror. "Boundless and imperishable", says Zimmer[8] "the cosmic waters are at once the immaculate source of all things and the dreadful grave. Through a power of self-transformation, the energy of the abyss puts forth, or assumes, individualized forms endowed with temporary life and limited ego-consciousness. For a time it nourishes and sustains these with a vivivying sap. Then it dissolves them again, without mercy or distinction, back into the anonymous energy out of which they arose." "Water", so the epic says (Mbh. XII 6805), "was generated as a second darkness in darkness." The waters are the abode of the dead,[9] they have their own secret name *(ādhāvāḥ)*.[10] The god of the waters Varuṇa has the

[8] *Myths and Symbols in Ind. Art and Civilization*, 1945, p. 34.
[9] Rönnow, *Trita Āptya*, p. 2.
[10] Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice*, p. 163.

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ominous, fear-inspiring and demoniacal quality which associates him with darkness and death.[11] The makara, a pre-eminently aquatic animal, sometimes has similar lugubrious qualities. We find the name 'makara of death'.[12] Even Soma, the elixir of life, drawn from the waters, is not quite free of properties that spread darkness, death and destruction. Soma when identified with the moon, is the god of the souls of the departed, and has the pitaras in his train. He is also identified with Vṛitra, the arch enemy of god and men, and sometimes with the god of darkness Varuṇa.[13] It is noteworthy that in one of the rare cases in which the padmamūla is mentioned in literature, *i.e.* in the Nepalese legend of Mañjuśrī (p. 56), the goddess who is called forth from the lotus-root and appears in demoniacal figure bears the significant name of Guhyeśvarī 'Lady of Mysteries'.

If we now follow the road which from these facts appears to lead to the core of our problem, we find at the beginning the taboo that was attached to everything connected with the waters and the associated ideas of darkness and death. To this taboo was attributed so great a power that it even affected the principle of life born in the bosom of the waters. And not only this principle but also the Tree that rose from this germ, the symbol of life from death, came under the ban of the same taboo.

Having arrived at this point our horizon becomes wider, and many features that were mysterious at first begin to stand out before us in clearer outline.

In the first place, it is no longer incomprehensible why symbolism occupied such a dominant place in Indian spiritual life. By dint of irresistible circumstances it was forced into that place. On the one hand there was the urge to make the Tree-motif, the heart of the entire Indian conception of life and world — of the 'Universism' as Heine-Geldern puts it — the centre of every activity, and function, of all thought and contemplation, whereas on the other hand a rigid taboo precluded a direct, undisguised, and distinct representation of that motif on pain of the direst calamaties.

The only passage between this Scylla and Charybdis was the road to symbolism, an 'escape' into symbolism as it were. Symbolism alone provided an opportunity to depict and to pronounce all that otherwise would have been forbidden to mortal man and symbolism also provided

[11] Rönnow, *op. cit.*, p. 8. On Varuṇa cf. H. Güntert, *Der arische Weltkönig und Heiland* (1923). — P. Kretschmer, "Varuṇa und die Urgeschichte der Inder," *Zeitschr. f. d. Kunde d. Morgenl.*, XXXIII (1926). B. Heimann, *Studien*, p. 22 ff. — Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas* II, p. 26 ff. — Meyer, *Trilogie*, III, p. 199-270. F. B. J. Kuiper, *De goddelijke moeder* (1939), p. 19; H. Lüders, *Varuṇa*, 1951.

[12] Senart, *Essai*, p. 178.

[13] Meyer, *Trilogie*, III, p. 203.

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the only means of making the Tree, notwithstanding the taboo, a distributor of life-prolonging and life-giving powers, a 'sprinkler of the elixir of life', for the benefit of all creation.

As for the reticence observed by tradition, if — as can hardly be doubted any longer — the mystery of life was meant to remain a mystery and consequently the Tree-complex and everything associated with it was tabooed, it is not surprising that we find no written record about it. Nor do we take exception at the idea that there may have been an uninterrupted, underground tradition passing on from the one generation to the other the great mystery of "was die Welt im Innersten zusammenhält".

In what manner and at what time this passing on took place? Who were the persons involved? What divided the initiated who consciously used the language of symbolism from the profane herd that only heard its sounds without being instructed in its meaning? All these questions are beyond our horizon. The clouds which for a while seemed to have dispersed are regathering around us, darker than ever.

Whereas in our above discussion we remained within the Indian sphere of influence, we shall have to disregard such limits when we now turn to the other problem which, as we remarked before, through its wide range hides from view the things behind it. It is the problem that we so far passed by but that no longer can be evaded since Tree-symbolism stands before us as a complete organism. It pertains to the question what a comparison of the Indian system with the systems of Tree-symbolism of other peoples will reveal to us.

When we attempt to answer this question, we must emphasize that we have been able to conduct our entire examination without having recourse to a comparison as mentioned, that means that we did not meet with any phenomena that could not be explained without the aid of extraneous material. This implies that the system examined so far is thoroughly Indian both in design and execution and this also is the final impression that may be gathered from our previous observations. Not only does Indian Tree-symbolism appear to be a solid self-contained system leaving but scanty room for non-Indian elements, but the logical evolution of the system from one simple Basic Form does not permit to assume that in the evolutionary process foreign influences had a part.

The indications are then that the Indian system is a product of Indian soil and, taken as a whole, is unparalleled. This makes it all the more striking that partial analogies with the Tree-conceptions of other peoples

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are far from rare. On the contrary, if the Indian system is broken up into its component parts, into detached 'motifs', there are few that do not occur in tree conceptions in other parts of the world. Adalbert Kuhn, already a century ago, in his pioneering study *Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertranks*, demonstrated convincingly that the analogies between Indian and non-Indian features often are so striking that migration of motifs or borrowing from a common source should be seriously reckoned with. His view has since received increasing support from the comparative studies in the fields of religion, history, ethnology, folklore, and prehistory.[14]

What are we to think of these analogies?

Since India provided us with the material for a comparative study, we certainly are in a better position to judge results than at the beginning of our enquiry, for though our knowledge still be fragmentary and incomplete, it cannot be denied that not only the main outline of the Indian symbolic system is clear but also that the available information about the place, the function, and the meaning of the various elements in it, and about the rules governing symbolic transfer is sufficient to guard us from glaring errors. And if we do not possess a similar knowledge about non-Indian systems, we shall not fail to notice when in the comparison between these systems and the Indian one the latter is wrongly interpreted, or connected with wrongly assumed parallels, or that the material is strained in any other way.

This can be demonstrated by quite a number of seemingly striking parallels. Let me give one illustration. In his otherwise most elucidatory paper "Old-Javanese contribution to the history of the wishing-tree", W. Aichele,[15] on the strength of a comparison made between the Javanese gunungan and the old Egyptian, Sumerian and Chinese tree-conceptions, draws the conclusion that the various figures of the gunungan have a markedly solar character. He refers to the oriental, particularly Assyrian and Hittite, pictures on clay seals showing on either side of the tree of life priests, male or animal spirits and also, as on the gunungan, animals

[14] Miss Heimann all too easily disposes of these comparative studies when she writes: "India can only be explained through its own nature and should therefore remain, or become again, isolated from other civilizations. Seemingly corresponding details that invite comparison are essentially unrelated as they sprang from different sources and their seeming similarity is actually incidental a common basis being lacking." (*Studien zur Eigenart indischen Denkens* (1930), p. IV). There is much truth in these words, but Tree-symbolism shows that matters are not so plain as the author would have us believe.

[15] *Djâwâ*, 1928, p. 28 ff.

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facing each other. Particularly startling in his opinion are the pictures on seals showing the sun-god upon or between two mountains after his attendants have opened the doors for his exit. Some of these doors, mostly appearing as shut, have bird-wings strongly reminiscent of the Javanese gunungan-pictures whose gates also have wings on either side. "This suggests", says Aichele, "that the gunungan door, too, serves the sun-god when he enters or leaves the underworld. In this manner the various sun symbols together with the doorway indicate the various stages of the sun-god's daily journey. The variations of the tree of life, known in the ancient Orient, indicate that the present-day Indonesian gunungan pictures, differing in detail, do not reach back to one basic form but to various forms transmitted through the intermediary of India."

So much for Aichele. Putting aside the question whether in the parallels drawn by him the Assyrian-Hittite representations are correctly interpreted — the absence of explanatory legends with the pictures increases our uncertainty — we must doubt whether his conception of the gunungan can pass muster.

To begin with, the winged gate, as we saw, has no connection with the sun-god but is the symbol of the padmamūla, the embodiment of the dark aquatic element, and as such the very antipole of Agni-Sūrya. Further, it is certainly wrong to regard the component parts of the gunungan as so many stations on the sun-god's daily route seeing that only the monster-head can serve as a true sun-symbol and this only under certain conditions (p. 145). Finally, the view that the present-day gunungan-representations do not reach back to a common basic form conflicts with the facts mentioned before, which all point the opposite way.

If, on the strength of the above experience, it is a fair assumption that a great number of the so-called striking parallels may be discarded, because, whatever the similarity in form, they fall short of the quality criterium, on the other hand, there can be no doubt that in quite a number of cases both the meaning and the form of the objects compared completely correspond. I shall not dwell on cases of this kind as the collecting and arranging of the material required for a comparison are far beyond the scope of the present study, but I wish to call the attention to one problem out of the many that a comparison of the tree-conceptions of various peoples present to us. I have in mind the cases that, within the Indian sphere of influence, tree-conceptions are found resembling the Indian conception and we are in doubt whether these conceptions have an autochthonous or an Indian origin.

Such uncertainty exists in the case of the inverted-tree motif spreading

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its branches downwards and its roots upwards, a motif not restricted to India but also occurring in a legend of the Orthodox Church, in an Icelandic riddle, in a Finnic magic song, in Lapland, in Dante (Purg. XXII 131 ff.)[16] and moreover found with various Indonesian tribes.

According to Gericke-Roorda, the 'waringin songsang' (inverted banyan) on Java is an *aji* (magic formula) used to obtain supernatural physical power. In the Javanese kuda-kèpang-game it is a protective prayer in which the tree pictured as surrounded by flames is conjured to explode and to return home in stones and trees[17]. In the lakon Murwakala it is the name of the lamp of the wayang-apparatus *(blenchong)*,[18] and according to a Jogjanese tradition, the picture of the 'waringin songsang' can be seen in the moon with leaves hanging down and roots upraised, covering the grave of Bagenda Ali, nephew and son-in-law of Mohammed.[19]

The Minangkabau people know the same magical tree. According to Van der Toorn[20] the 'beringin sungsang' is an imaginary tree whose rough leaves are turned upwards. Growing on the moon the tree is a pleasure-ground for children who died young and being brought there by bidadaris are laid to rest in golden cradles suspended from the luxuriant foliage.

The moslem Malay, according to Aichele[21] regards the inverted waringin as the tree of paradise, the celestial counterpart of the waringin-trees planted by him. If a man entertains a particular desire the prayer is introduced by the words: "May I attain, through the blessing of the holy inverted waringin, . . ."

The same idea of the inverted tree appears to occur also in the Lampong-regions and with the Kayans on Borneo. In the former place it is called Malasa Kepampang and is a tree whose roots stand upright whilst the leaves hang down, and whose shadow is golden. The Kayans have the custom, when invoking blessing on a home, to plant a tree in front of the house whose branches are buried in the earth and whose roots rise upward.[22]

Even more complicated is the situation with Indonesian tribes with whom the magical tree is not more or less isolated amongst other representations but has become the centre of a conception of the world which in its turn shows a remarkable resemblance with Indian cosmological representations.

[16] U. Holmberg, "Der Baum des Lebens", *Am. Ac. Scient. Fennicae*, XVI, 3 (1922), p 54.— Coomaraswamy, *The inverted tree*, p. 15 ff.
[17] P. de Roo de la Faille, *Javaansche en Maleische legenden in raadselgewaad* (Javanese and Malay legends in the shape of riddles), 1934, p. 3.
[18] W. H. Rassers, "Over den zin van het Jav. drama", *BKI*, 81 (1925), p. 365.
[19] Resink -Wilkens, "Over den Jogja'schen feestkalender," *Djâwâ*, 1932, p. 166.
[20] *BKI*, 39, p. 87.
[21] *Djâwâ*, 1928, p. 89.
[22] Hose and McDougall, *The Pagan tribes of Borneo*, II (1912), p. 86.

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Such is the case with the Ngaju Dyaks in South-Bornea.[23] To the Ngaju-people the world consists of two halves, the upper world where dwell the male god Ranying Mahatala Langit and the goddess Tambon (or water-snake, cf. the Devī Kuṇḍalinī in the microscosmic Indian cosmology), also called Bawin Jata Balawang Bulan (the female Jata of the golden gate, cf. the gate of the gunungan). Between them is the world of men. Once, so the legend goes, Ranying Mahatala Langit looking down from the upper world dropped his head gear. It landed in the primeval waters and changed into the tree of life Batang Garing Belom (cf. the makuṭa-shaped mūla as the root of the world-tree, Pl. 69*b*). On this tree two hornbills meet picking at the fruit (cf. the two birds atop the celestial tree in the Rigvedic riddle, and the couple of birds on the top of the gunungan on Pl. 69*a*) and engaging in a spirited fight. From this fight emerge various objects and also the first human beings. Their descendants are divided in two tribal halves, the one being associated with the deity of the sky or his representative the hornbill, the other with the water-goddess Tambon or her representative the water-snake. At the creation of the universe and of man both cosmic powers cooperate, the human soul being a gift from the sky-god, the body one from the goddess of the nether world (cf. purusha and prakṛiti).

Elsewhere[24] we read that with the Dyaks of South-Borneo the centre of the abode of the blessed is the celestial tree of life, the Batang Garing, whose stem has a growth containing the danum kakiringan or elixir of life (cf. the mūla as a receptacle for the amṛita). According to another description[25] the same tree bears golden blossoms and has agate pearls for fruit (cf. the kalpataru). Its knots are filled with water of life, and when they grow old they produce all sorts of sacred vessels (cf. the kumbha-motif).

The Biajus, too, know the tree of life.[26] It is represented as a lance which at the same time is a tree (cf. the shaft-stambha-stem motif, p. 152) having multi-coloured pieces of cloth for leaves and diamonds for fruits. Its stem or shaft is called Batang Garing and the top or point Telajuk Bunuh (a superposition of both cosmic trees?). On the right and left of the top sun and moon have been drawn. This lance is erected in a gong filled with rice representing the world's highest mountain, the diamond or golden mountain (cf. the golden Meru as the base of the cosmic and celestial pillar, p. 95 ff.).

It is easier to observe that the analogies between the Indian and the above Dyak representations are as numerous as they are remarkable than to offer an explanation of their origin. The question in what direction this explanation must be looked for depends on whether Indian influences played a part in Dyak cosmography. If such was not the case, then these analogies are on a par with the points of resemblance between tree-

[23] H. Schärer, "Die Vorstellungen der Ober- und Unterwelt bei den Ngadju Dajak von Süd-Borneo," *Cult. Ind.*, IV (1942), p. 78. Id., *Die Gottesidee der Ngadju Dajak in Süd-Borneo* (Leiden, 1946), pp. 15 ff.

[24] K. A. H. Hidding, "De beteekenis van de kekajon," *TBG*, LXXI (1931), p. 647.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 648.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 649.

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conceptions belonging to civilizations that, to our knowledge, were not historically or geographically connected. This will place us before the same questions that so often rise in the comparative study of religion, mythology, ethnology, folklore and prehistory, and have produced such varying answers: are we dealing with a case of borrowing, from a common source, of independent growth, or of evolutionary convergence?

If, on the other hand, Indian influences are assumed, then we meet another obstacle, the difficulty to decide in which of the two eras, divided by many centuries, these influences operated. Was it in the prehistoric era when the ancestors of the present-day Indonesians still inhabited the Asiatic continent and had cultural contact with the inhabitants of the Indian plains? Or was it in the historic age, when the Archipelago was hinduized, and the seeds were sown from which, more of less independent of the Indian pattern, various systems of Tree-symbolism may have sprung, including the Dyak system?

In either case it is to be assumed that the original Indian representations went through a process of adaptation imparting to them the specifically indigenous character which they so markedly display at the present day.

It is evident that as we approach the end of our enquiry problems crowd upon us of great importance, both for comparative study in general and for our knowledge of Indonesian conceptions. But as I remarked before, this is not the place to go into these problems.

Only one final remark I wish to submit here. There is no need for Bastian's now abandoned theory of the 'Elementargedanken', neither for Jung's 'Archetypen', or for Leisegang's 'Denkformen', to make it acceptable that the appearance of tree-conceptions with various peoples on earth has been greatly influenced by the tendencies of human genius, universally alike. By this I mean that the intricacy of Indian tree-symbolism in the later stages of its development should not blind us to the fact that the original idea was simple and natural to such an extent that it could hardly fail to force itself in archaic times on any people in the process of forming a conception of life and world. What could be more natural than that that conception should be prompted by a product of creation that shares with man the most precious gift, the gift of life? And what could be more obvious than to make the huge, steadfast, and ever-rejuvenating tree of the forest the centre of that conception?

From Tree to Tree-symbolism is but a step. Human imagination may have its play both with the whole organism of the wood-giant and with each of its parts. Alternately it may see its stem as a pillar, as a mountain-

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top, or as a human trunk with a pair of robust branches for arms, whilst its huge crown of branches and foliage represent the wide-spreading shock of hair of a gigantic being. It is in this process of metamorphosis that the Great Man is born, the embodiment of the godhead, the embodiment of the god on earth, the king, as well.

The evolution, however, may also take a different course. In this case the stem, acting as cosmic pillar, becomes the support of the firmament, whilst the sun sets on the pillar top, the stars follow their course round the axis, and the foliage represents clouds from which soft rain descends upon the earth and fertilizes it.

In short, the evolution of Tree-symbolism with the various peoples on earth was so naturally conditioned and so much predestined to follow established paths prescribed by ever the same play of human imagination, that it is no wonder that the final results are practically identical, although local conditions, associations, and notions may have left their mark on these products and lent them their autochthonous cultural character.

The above argument may be reversed: just as similar causes may produce similar effects, so similar phenomena may be traced to similar causes. In our case: when vastly distant spheres of civilization present identical ideas, customs, and motifs not attributable to borrowing or common origin, would it not be likely that these phenomena represent the final effects of developments that have moved along the same ways and had for their beginning the same source, the great creator of all life, the primeval Tree?

The organs instrumental in yielding these fruits may long since have withered and disappeared, yet it is these very fruits that the Tree is known by.

The essential task of future comparative study will be, I believe, to give serious thought to the above possibility.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Nos. 1*a*, *b*; 8*b*, *c*; 9*a*; 11*c*; 12*c-d*; 15*a*; 19-24; 25; 26; 27*b*; 30*b*; 45*a*; 52*a-d*; 53*a-f*; 55*b*; 63; 64*b*; 79*a* are reproduced from *Barabuḍur*, I and II; 2*a*; 6*c*; 13*c*; 18*b* from J. Burgess, *Anc. Mon.*; 5*c* from the same author, *Amarāvatī*; 2*d* from *Mem. Arch. Survey of Ceylon*, I (1924); 5*a*, *b*; 27*d*; 31*d* from A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, II; 4*d*; 57*b* from the s.a. *HIIA*; 78*a* from the s.a. *Elements of buddh. Iconography*; 3*d*, 48 from G. de Coral Rémusat, *Les arts de l'Indochine*; 10*c* from the s.a. *RAA*, 1934; 36*b-d*; 44*a-c*; 47*b*; 50*c-d*,, 51*c* from the s.a. *L' art khmer*; 6*b* from *The Bagh Caves*, ed. Ind. Society, 1927; 7*a*, 13*d* from Rea, *Pallava Arch.*, 1909; 7*c* from J. Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*; 10*c* from Cousens, *Chalukyan Arch.*, 1926; 11*d*, 14*b*, 29*a*, *b*; 33*d*; 42*a*, *c* from photographs by Th. van Erp; 15*b* from Tucci, *Tib. painted Scrolls*; 17 from Janse, *Arch. Res. in Indochina*; 18*a* from A. Grünwedel, *Altbuddh. Kultstätten in chin. Turkestan*, 1912; 37*b*, *c*; 77*c* from the s.a. *Mythol. des Buddh.*; 18*c* from Holmberg, *Der Baum des Lebens*, 1922-23; 18*e* from Goblet d'Alvilla, *La migration des symboles*; 31*b* from A. Getty, *Gaṇeça*, 1936; 70*b*, *c*; 71*a*; 77*a* from the s.a. *The Gods of Northern Buddh.*; 37*a*; 72*a*, *b* from Banerji, *Eastern School of Mediaeval Sculpt.*, *ASI*, n.s., XLVII; 40*a* 47*d*; from J. F. Rock, *Studies in Na-khi Lit.*, *BEFEO*, XXXVII; 40*b*; 54*c* from *Picture Section of the Tripiṭaka*; 45*d* from G. Coedès, *RAA*, 1935; 45*b*, *c* from H. Parmentier, *L' art khmer classique*, I, 1939; 50*b* from the s.a., *BEFEO*, XIX (1919); 46 from *Art et arch. khmer*; 49*c* from Ph. Stern, *BEFEO*, XXXVIII (1939); 58*c* from H. Schärer, *Die Gottesidee der Ngadju-Dajak in Süd-Borneo*, 1946; 60 from J. Brandes, *Hommage au congr. des orientalistes de Hanoi*, 1902; 61*a*, *c* from Krishna Sastri, *South Ind. Images*; 66*a*, 67*a* from H. Bergema, *De boom des levens in schrift en historie*, 1938; 66b, 68a from K.A.H. Hidding, *TBG*, LXXI (1931); 67*b* from R. Heine-Geldern, *WBKKA*, 1930; 69*a*; 78*c*; 80*a*, *b* from J. Kats, *Het Javaansche Tooneel*; 69*b* from C. McPhee, *Djâwâ*, 1936; 70*d*, *e* from L. Adam, *Buddhastatuen*; 83 from *Ann. Rep. of the Mysore Arch. Dept. for the year* 1938, 1940.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABIA:	*Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology, published by the Kern Institute, Leiden.*
AGBG:	A. Foucher, *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra*, I (1905); II (1918); III (1951).
AO:	*Acta Orientalia, ediderunt Societates Orientales Batava, Danica, Norvegica, Svecica*, Copenhagen.
ASI, AR:	*Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report.*
Barabuḍur:	I. N. J. Krom, *Barabuḍur, Archaeological Description*, 1927; II, Th. van Erp, *Barabuḍur, Bouwkundige beschrijving* [Architectural Description], 1931.
BCAI:	*Bulletin de la commission archéologique de l'Indochine.*
BEFEO:	*Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient.*
BKI:	*Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* [Contributions to Philology, Geography and Ethnology, publ. by the Royal Institute for Philology, Geography and Ethnology, The Hague].
BSO(A)S:	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies.*
Cat.Mus. Bat.:	W. P. Groeneveldt, *Catalogus der Archeologische Verzameling van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, 1887 [Catalogue of the Archaeological Collection of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences].
Cat. REM:	*Catalogus van 's Rijks Ethnographisch Museum, Leiden*, Vol. V: *Javaansche Oudheden*, (Leiden, 1909) [Catalogue of the State Museum for Ethnology, Javanese Antiquities].
Cult. Ind.:	*Cultureel Indië*, published by the Colonial Institute, Amsterdam.
Ep. Ind.:	*Epigraphia Indica.*
HIIA:	Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 1927.
IAL:	*Indian Art and Letters*, publ. by the India Society.
Inleiding:	N. J. Krom, *Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche kunst*, 2nd ed., 1923 [Introduction to Hindu-Javanese Art].
IPEK:	*Annual Review of Prehistoric and Ethnographical Art.*
JA:	*Journal asiatique.*
JAOS:	*Journal of the American Oriental Society.*
JB & ORS:	*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Society.*
JISOA:	*Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art.*
JRAS:	*Journal of the Oriental Society of Great Britain and Ireland.*
KSS:	*Kathāsaritsāgara*, Bombay-ed.
Mém. EFEO:	*Mémoires de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient.*
MKAW:	*Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen* [Communications of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Amsterdam].
NBG:	*Minutes of the Council Meetings of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences.*
NION:	*Nederlandsch-Indië Oud en Nieuw* [The Netherlands Indies Old and New].
OAZ:	*Ostasiatische Zeitschrift.*

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OD: *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlands-Indië* [Archaeological Survey of the Netherlands Indies].

OV: *Oudheidkundige Verslag* [Reports of the Archaeological Survey of the Netherlands Indies].

QJMyth. Soc.: *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society.*

RAA: *Revue des Arts Asiatiques.*

RMVk: *National Museum for Ethnology, Leyden.*

ROC: *Rapporten van de Oudheidkundige Commissie* [Reports of the Commission in the Netherlands Indies for Archaeological Research].

ROD: *Rapporten van de Oudheidkundige Dienst* [Reports of the Archaeological Survey in the Netherlands Indies].

SBE: *Sacred Books of the East.*

TBG: *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* [Journal for Indonesian Philology, Geography and Ethnography, publ. by the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences].

VKAW: *Proceedings of the Royal Academy of Science, Amsterdam.*

WBKKA: *Wiener Beiträge zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Asiens.*

ZDMG: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.*

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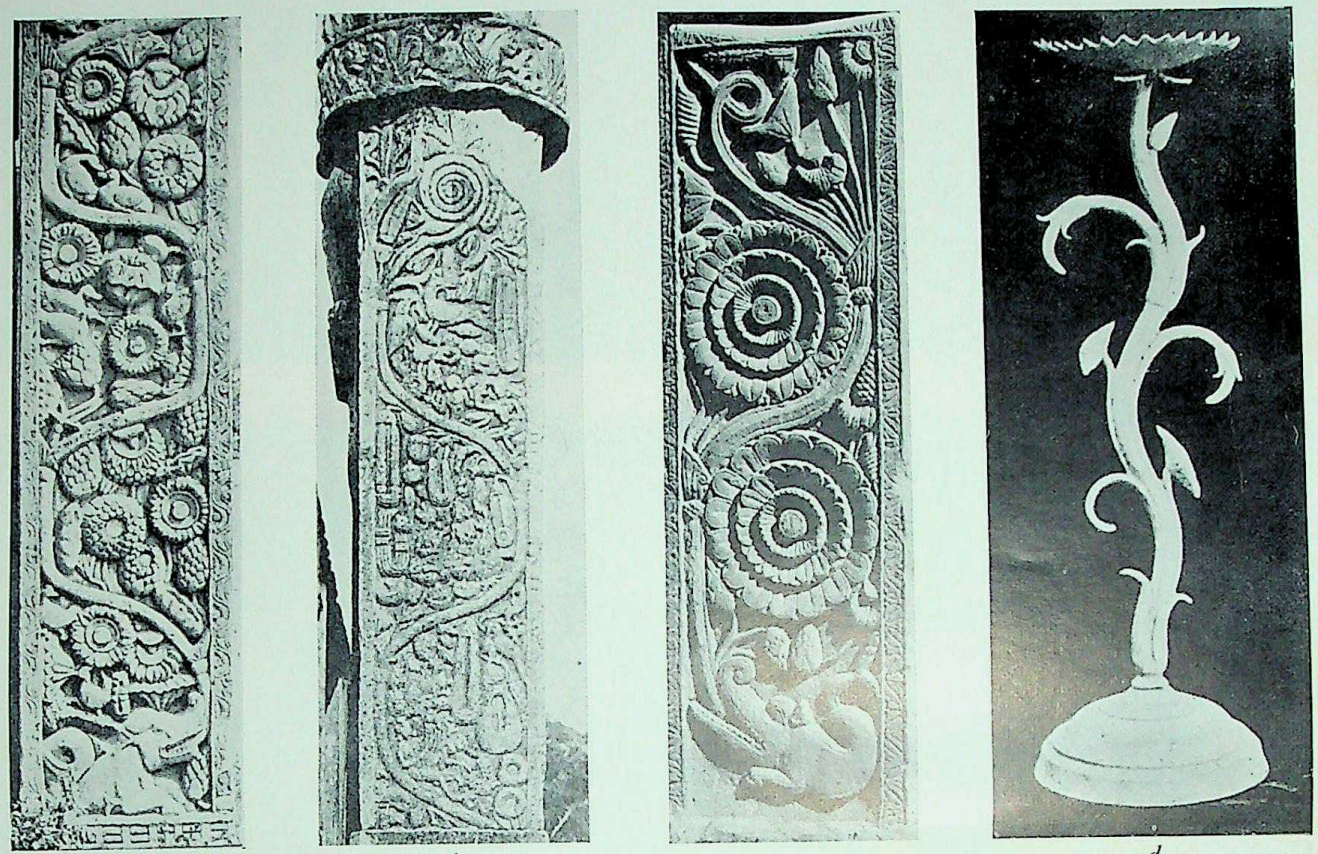
a

b

a and *b*: Barabuḍur



a *b* *c* *d*

a, *b*, and *c*: Sānchi; *d*: bronze censer Anurādhapura, Ceylon

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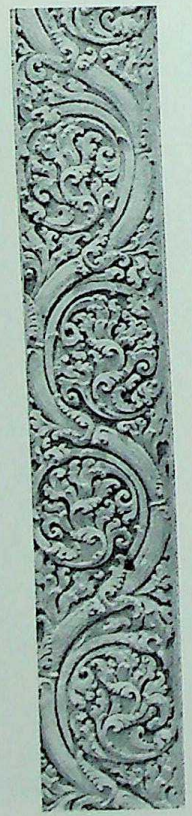
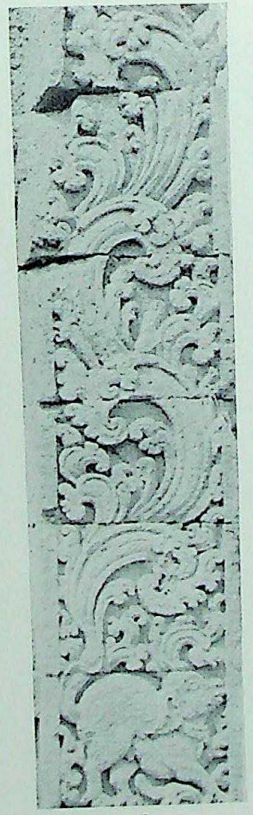
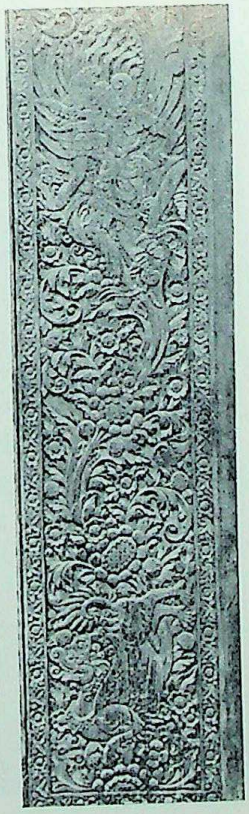


a



b



c

d

a: Chaṇḍi Kalasan, Central Java; *b*: Chaṇḍi Jago, East Java;
c: wooden door-panel, Bali; *d*: Bantéay Srei, Cambodia

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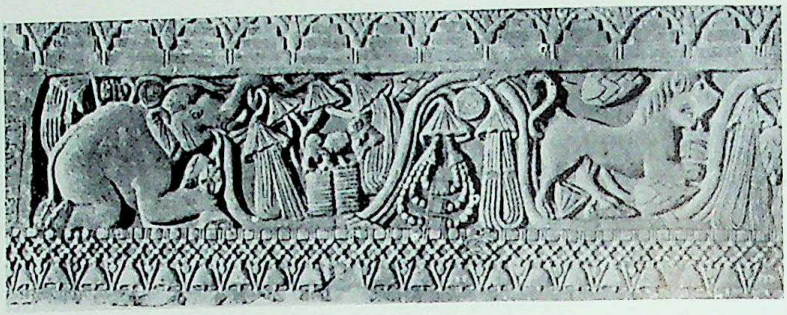
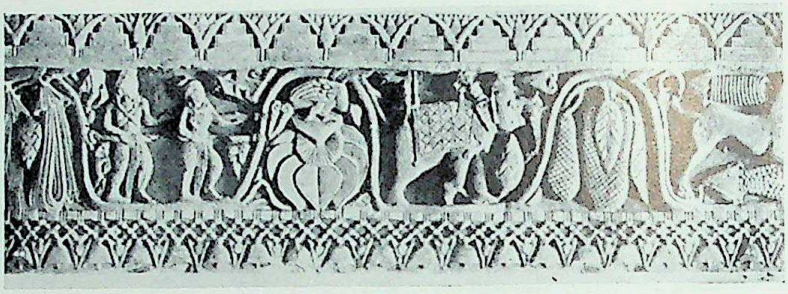


a



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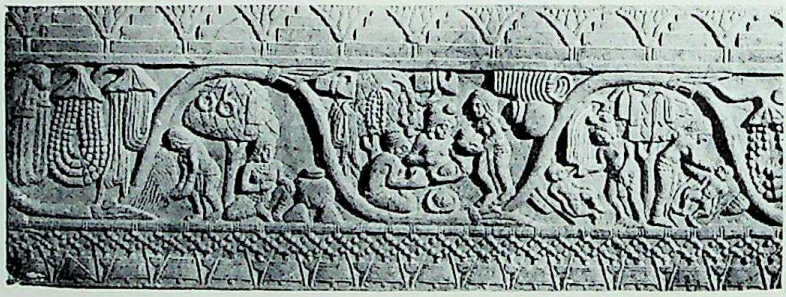
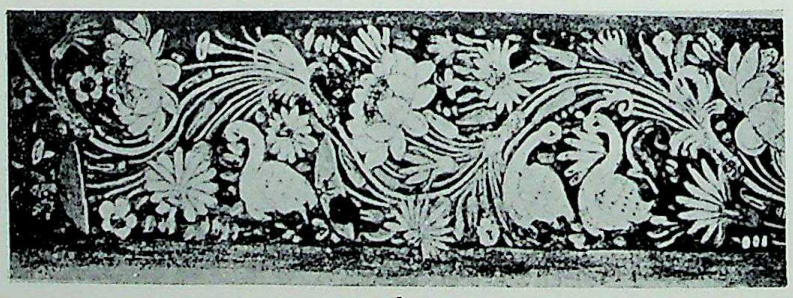


c



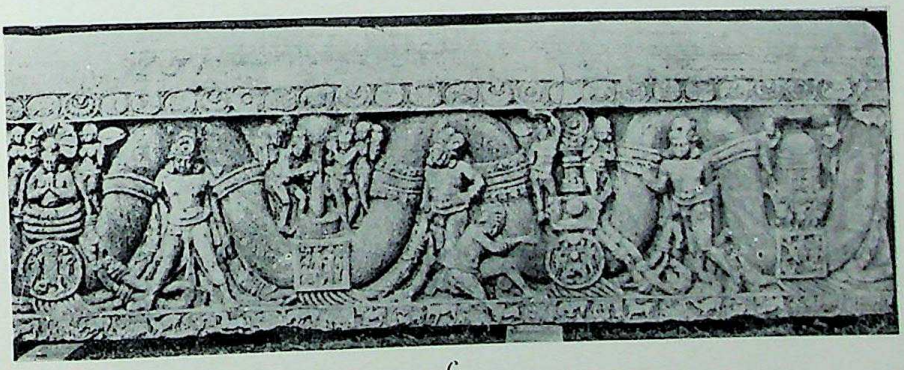
d

a, *b*, and *c*: Bharhut; *d*: Ajaṇṭā

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

a

b



c

a: Southern toraṇa Sānchi; *b*: detail from *a*; *c*: Amarāvatī

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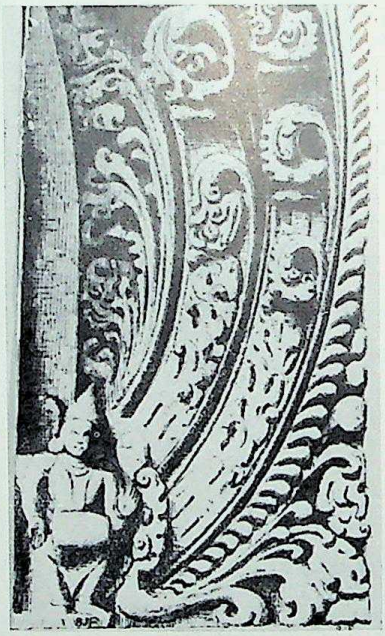
a

b



c

a: Śiva temple Bhumāra, Nagod State; *b*: Bāgh, Gwalior State; *c*: Balligamwe, Mysore

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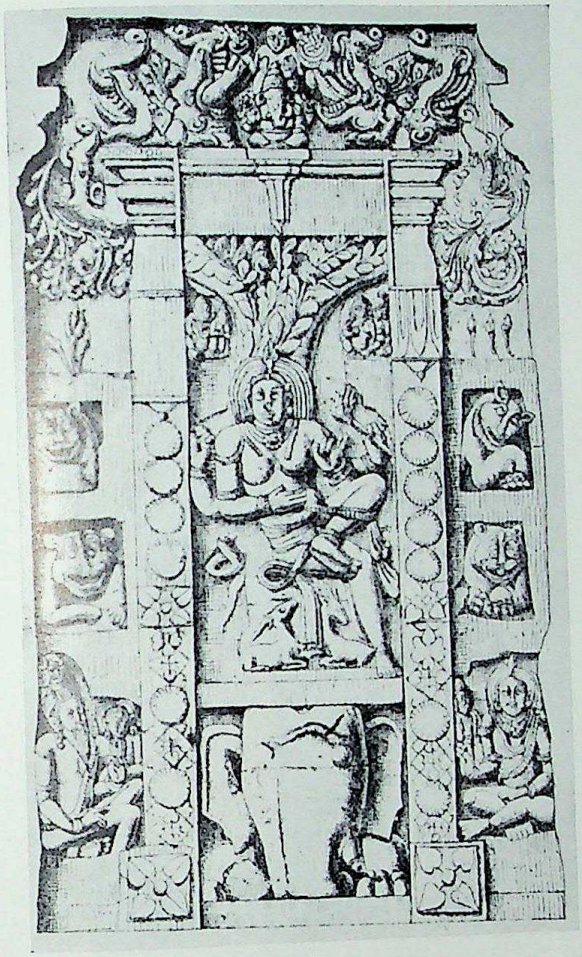
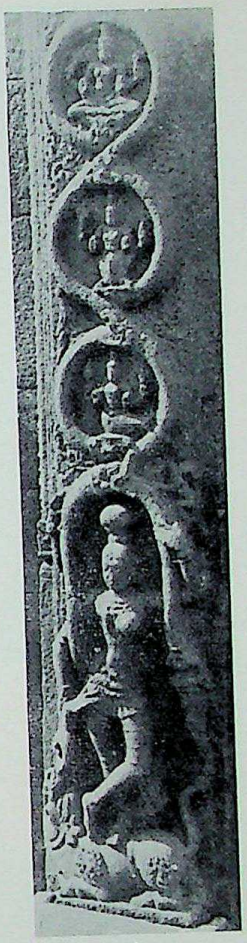


a



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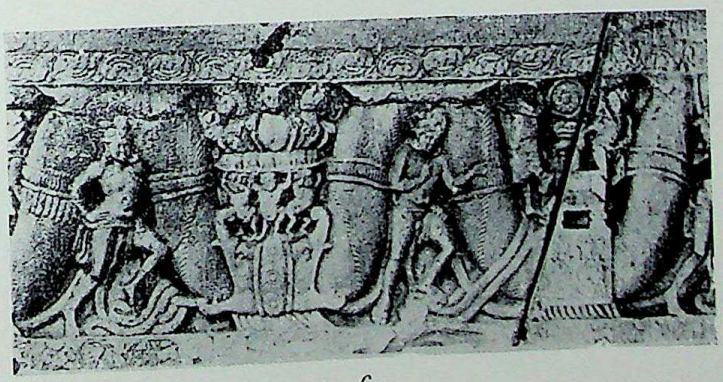

c

a: Kailāsanātha temple, Kānchīpuram; *b*: Roya Gopuram, Māmallapuram, Madras; *c*: Amarāvatī

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a

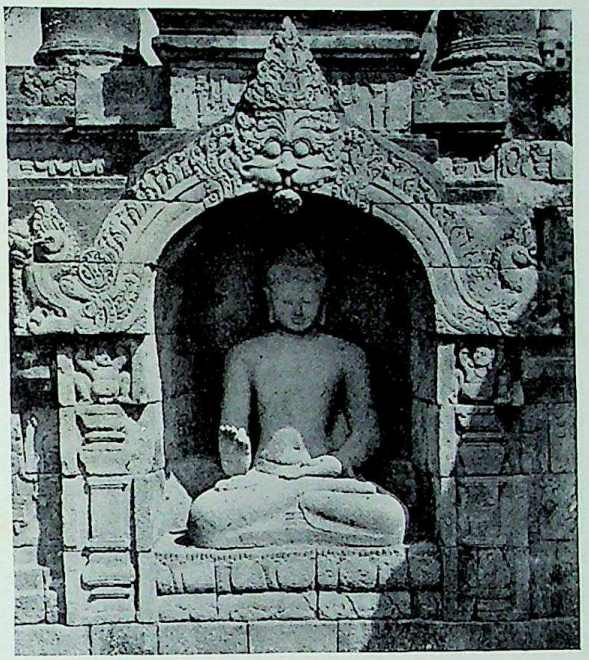
b

c

d

a: Chaṇḍi Kalasan, Central Java; *b* and *c*: Barabuḍur; *d*: Chaṇḍi Meṇḍut, Central Java

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

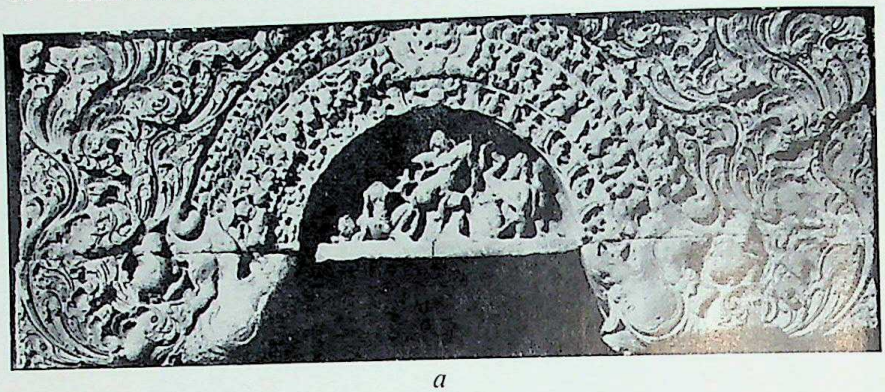


a

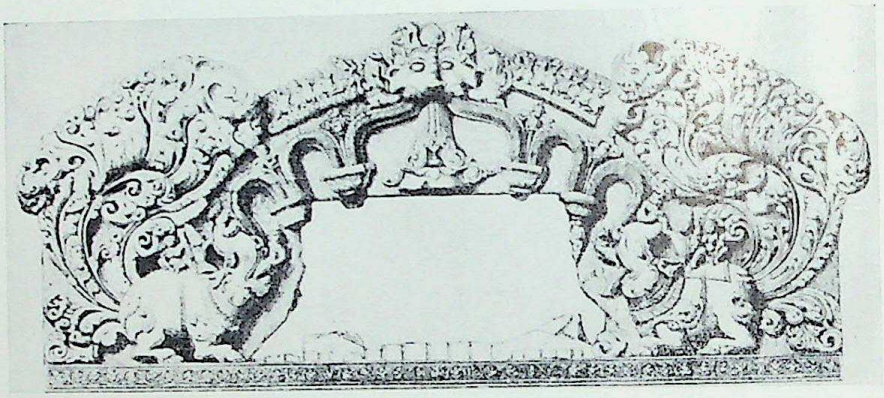
b

a: Barabuḍur; *b*: Śiva temple, Prambanan

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



a



b

c

a: Aisvara temple, Sinnar; *b*: Doḍḍa Basavanna, Dhārwār distr.
c: Sambor Prei Kuk, Cambodia

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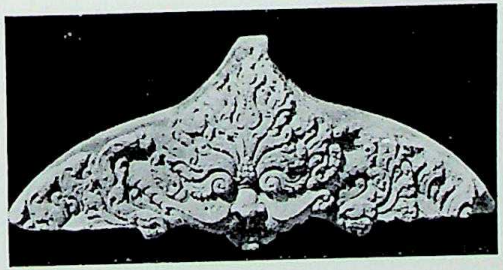
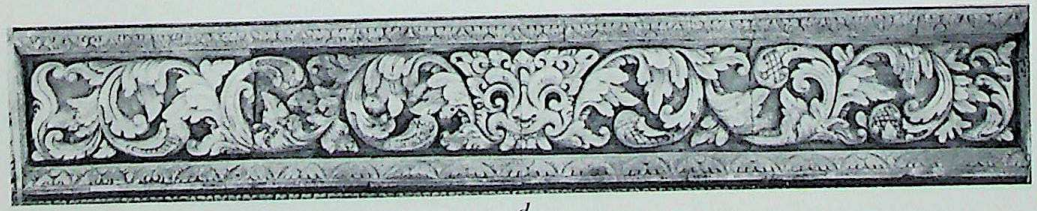
THE MONSTER-HEAD — HINDU-JAVANESE AND BALINESE VARIETIES

a

b



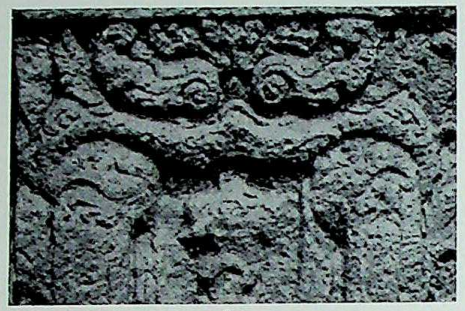
c



d

a: Geḍong Sanga, Central Java; *b*: Śiva temple, Prambanan; *c*: Barabuḍur; *d*: Bali

a



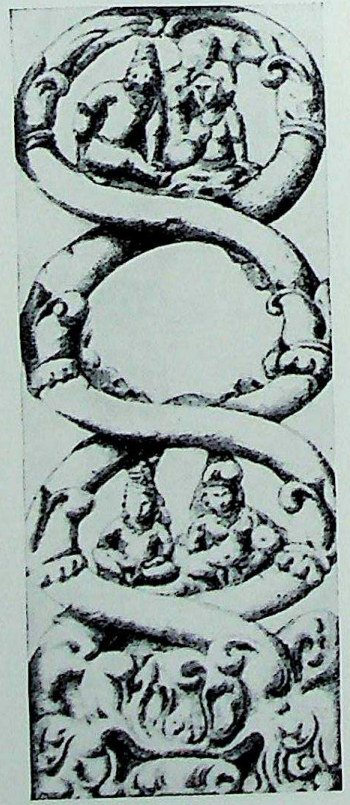
b

c

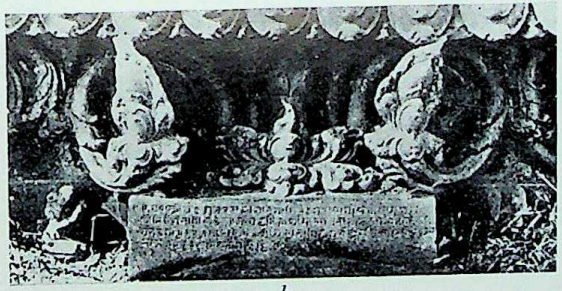
d

a: Geḍong Sanga, Central Java; *b-d*: Barabuḍur

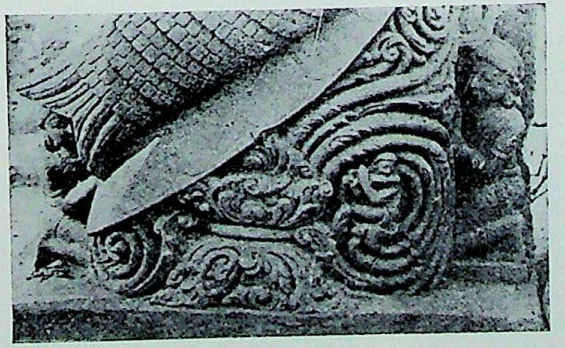
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



a



b



c

a: Kacheśvara temple, Kānchīpuram; *b*: pedestal of image, Rajāona, Mongīr distr.; *c*: idem, Garhwā, Allabahad distr.

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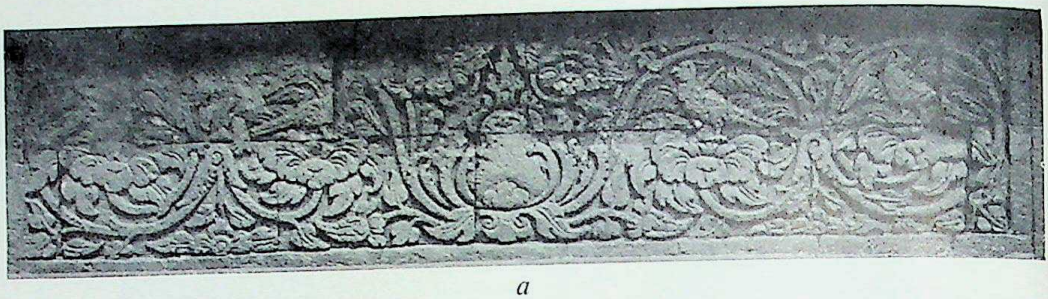
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



a

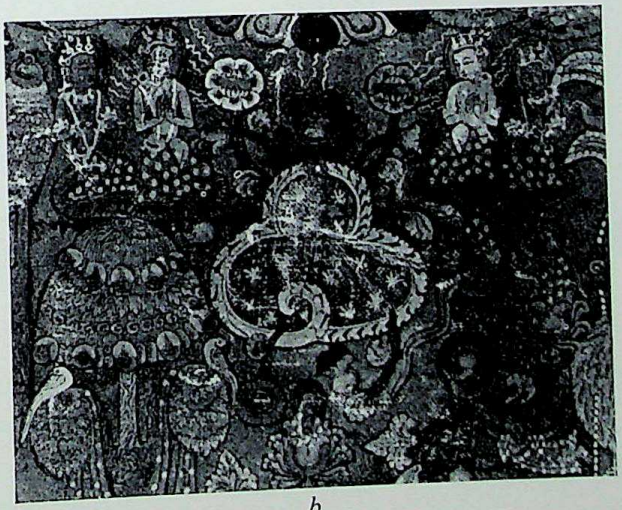
b

c

a: Chaṇḍi Meṇḍut, Central Java; *b*: Southern court-temple, Prambanan; *c*: Balinese wood-carving

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

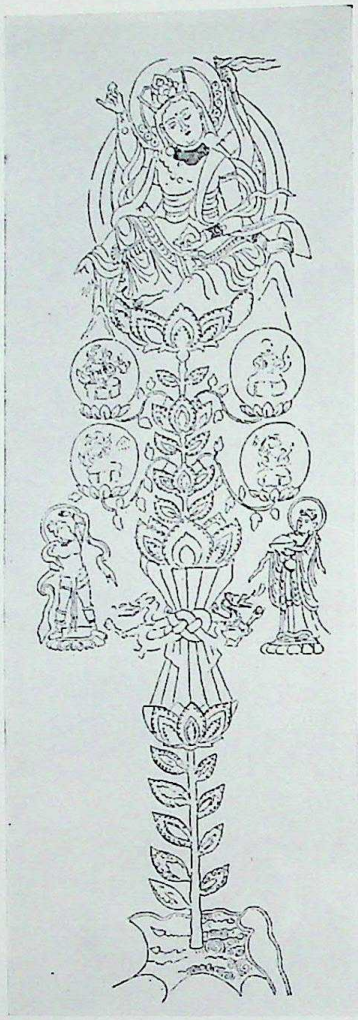
a



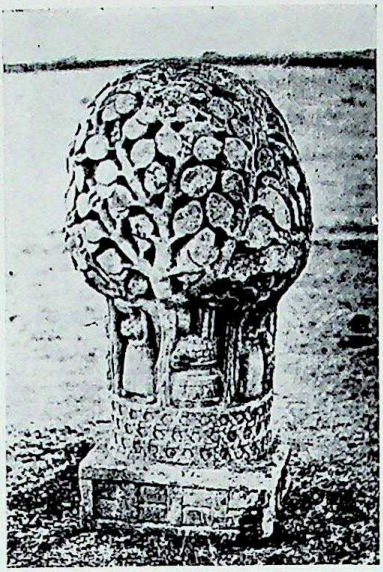
b

a: Barabuḍur; *b*: detail from a Tibetan painted scroll

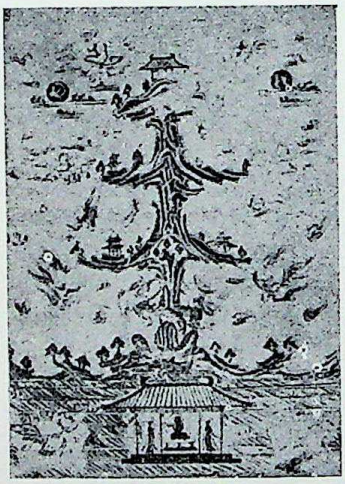
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



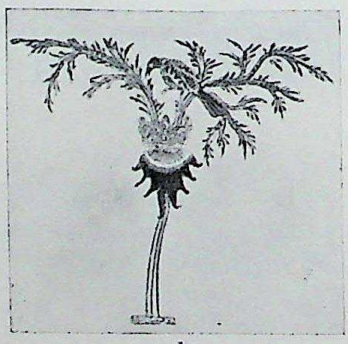
a



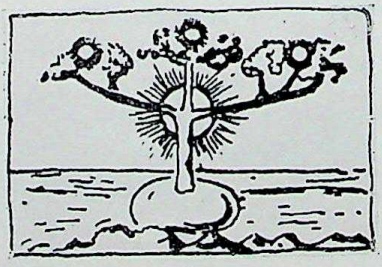
b



c



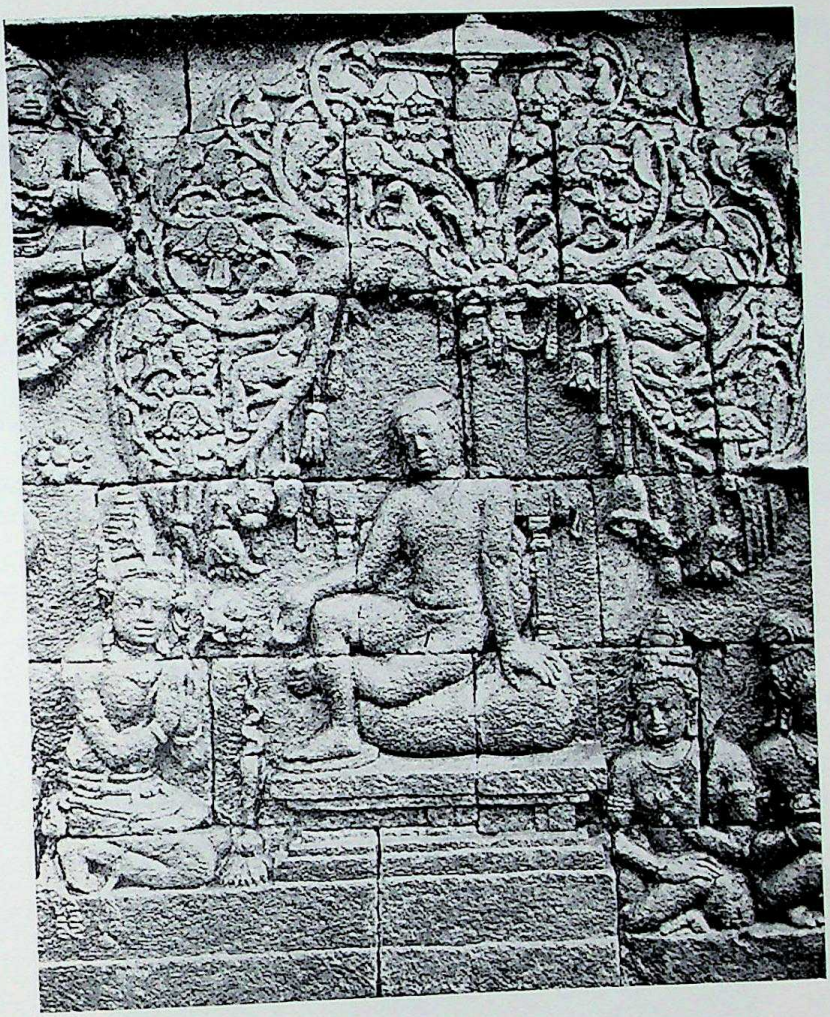
d



e

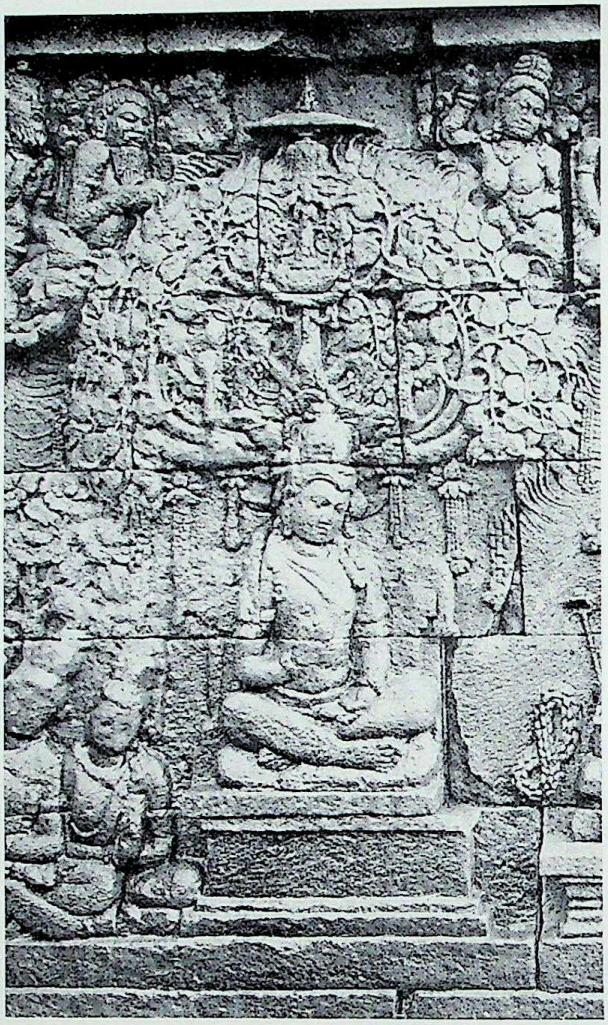
a: Bäzäklik, East Turkestan; *b*: top-piece of a pillar, Besnagar; *c*: detail from a Japanese kakemono; *d*: detail from a Balinese painting; *e*: Indian miniature

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



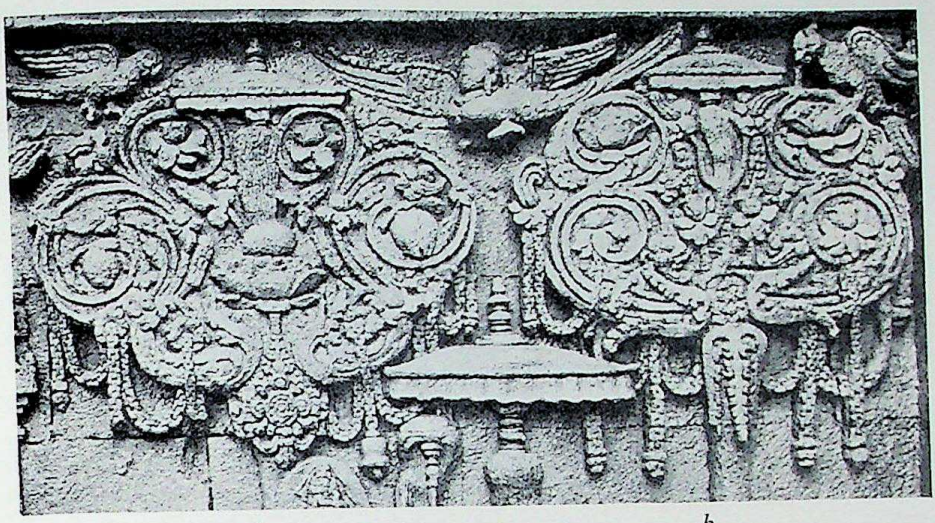
Barabuḍur

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

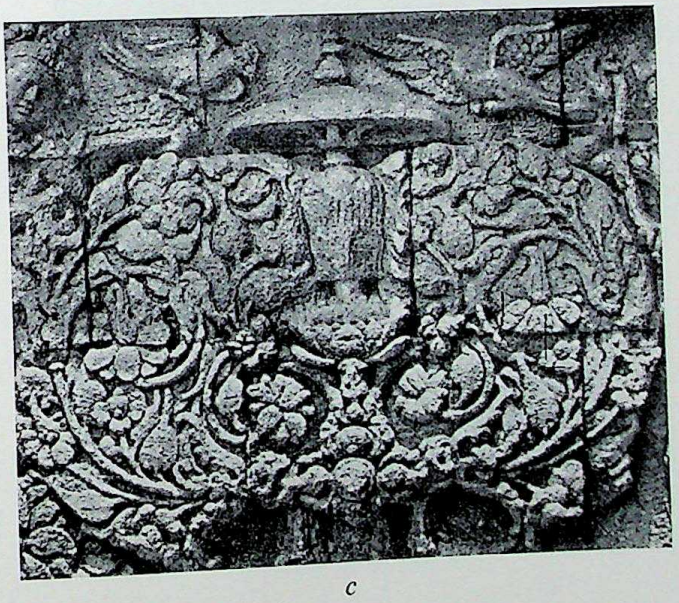


Barabuḍur

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



a *b*

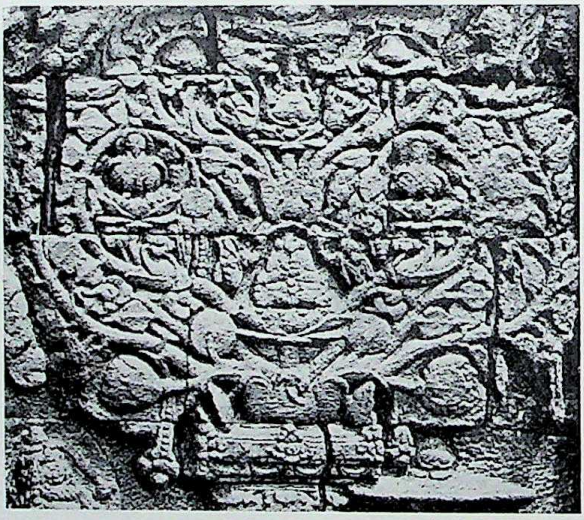


c

a-c: Barabuḍur

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

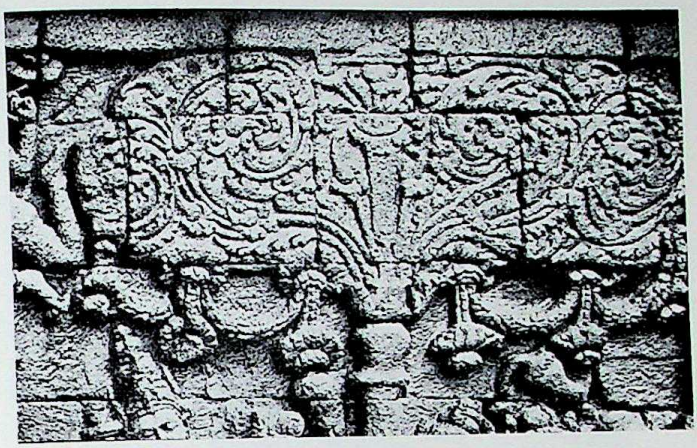
a



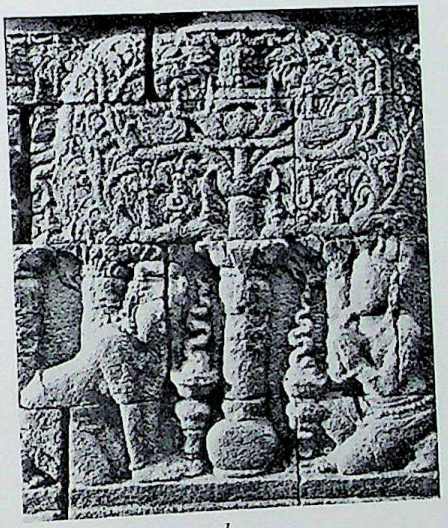
b

a and *b*: Barabuḍur

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



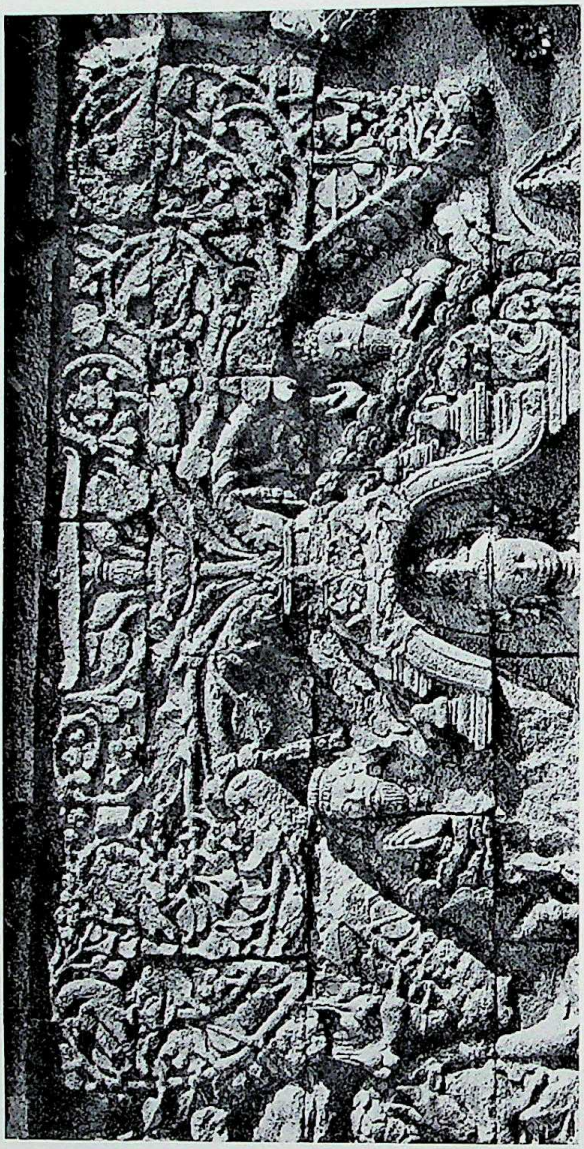
a



b

a and *b*: Barabuḍur

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



Barabuḍur

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

a

b

c

d

a-d: Barabuḍur

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

a

b

c

d

a-d: Barabuḍur

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

a

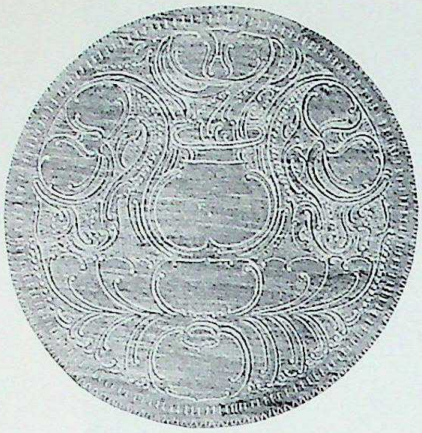
b

c

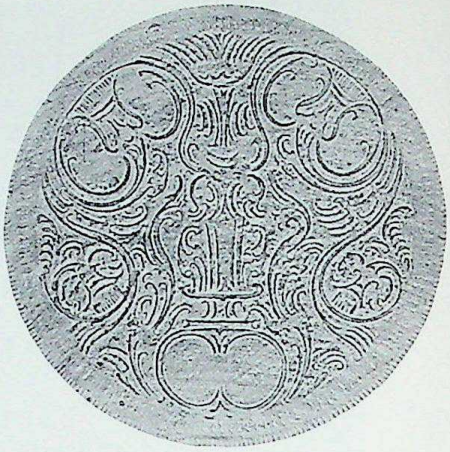
d

a: Amarāvatī; *b*: Barabuḍur; *c*: Bali; *d*: Polonnāruva, Ceylon

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



a



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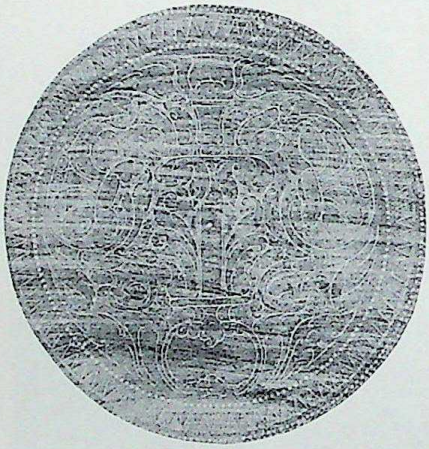
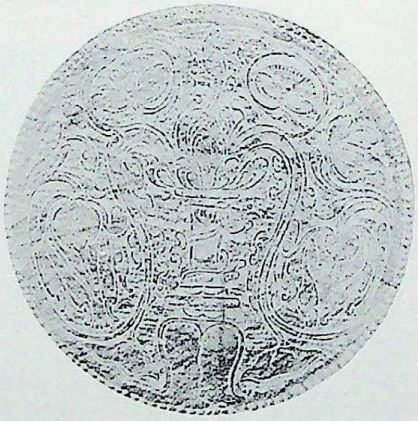


c

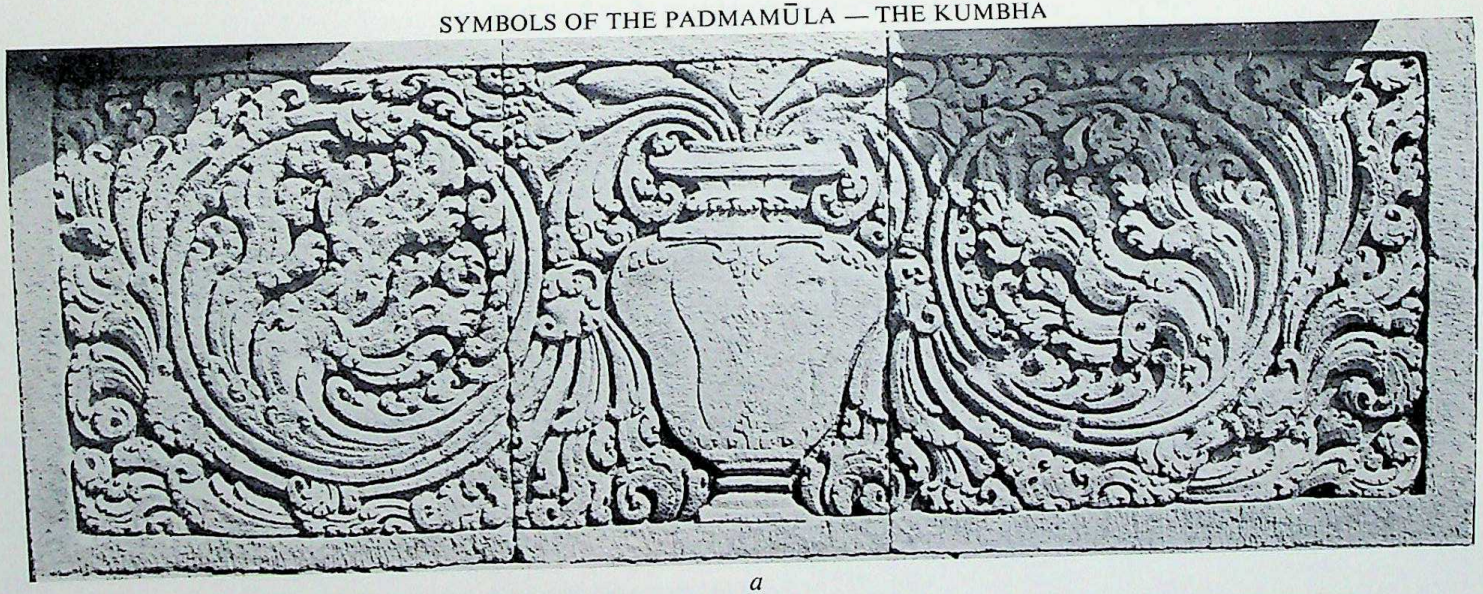


d

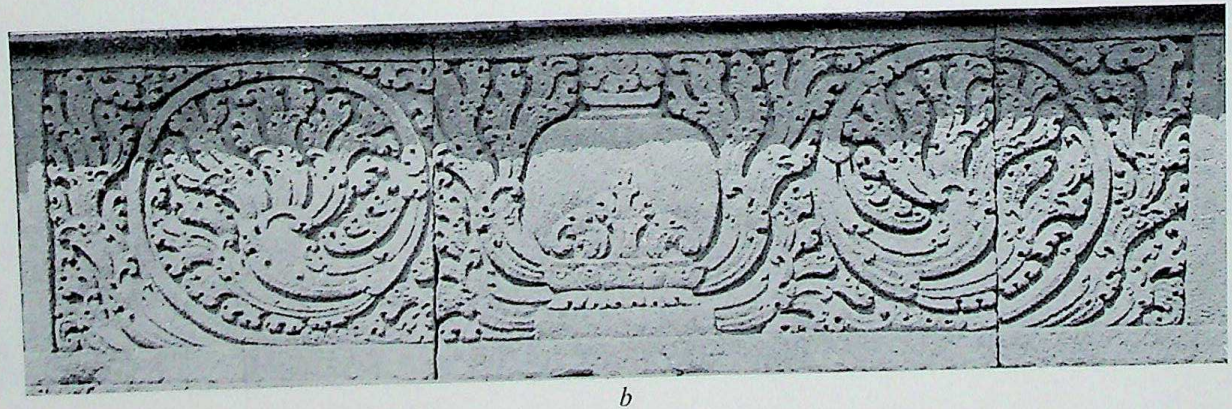
Ornaments on bronze dishes used in priestly ritual, Central Java

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

SYMBOLS OF THE PADMAMŪLA — THE KUMBHA



a

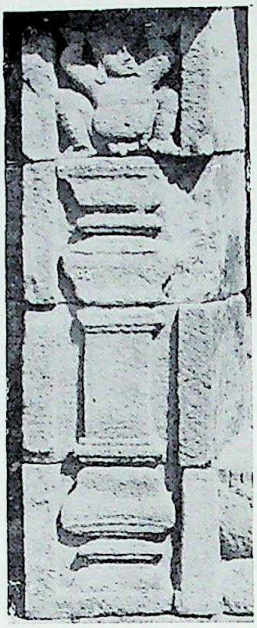


b

a: Śiva temple, Prambanan; *b*: Haṃsa temple, Prambanan

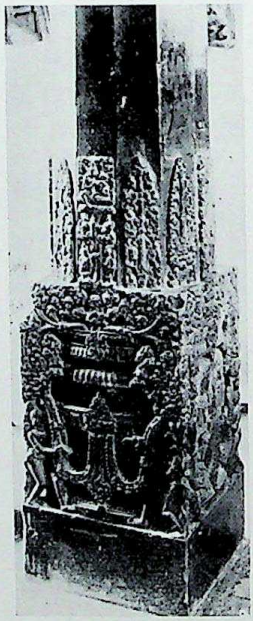
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

a



b

c



d

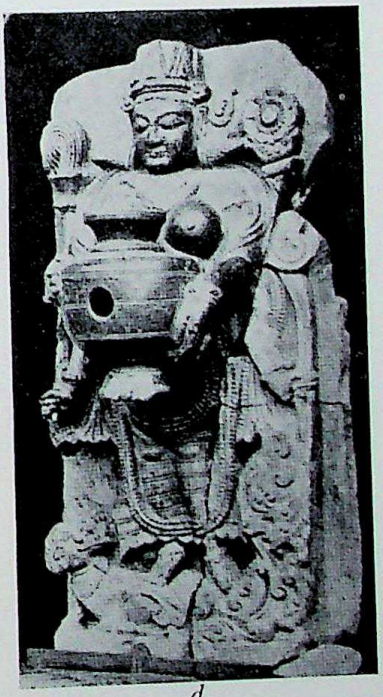
a: Chaṇḍi Sewu, Central Java; *b*: Barabuḍur; *c*: back-side of image, Mathurā; *d*: Ajaṇṭā

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

a

b

c

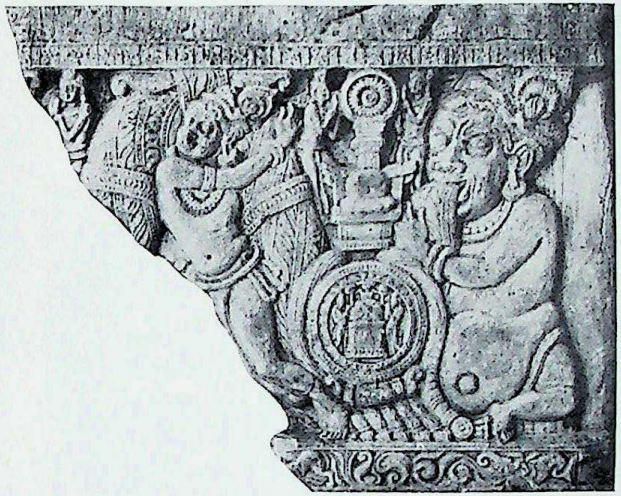


d

a: The god Śiva as Mahāguru, Chaṇḍi Banon, Central Java; *b*: Gaṇeśa, South India; *c*: Kuvera, Satna, Baghelkand; *d*: four-armed goddess, Jagatsukh, Kulū

a

b



c

a: Chaṇḍi Lumbung, Central Java; *b*: Bharhut; *c*: Amarāvatī

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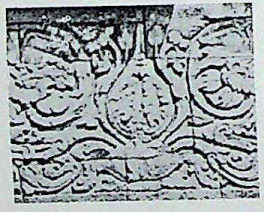
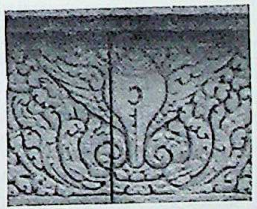
SYMBOLS OF THE PADMAMŪLA — THE CONCH



a

b



c

d

a, *b* and *d*: Chaṇḍi Meṇḍut, Central Java; *c*: Chaṇḍi Plaosan, Central Java

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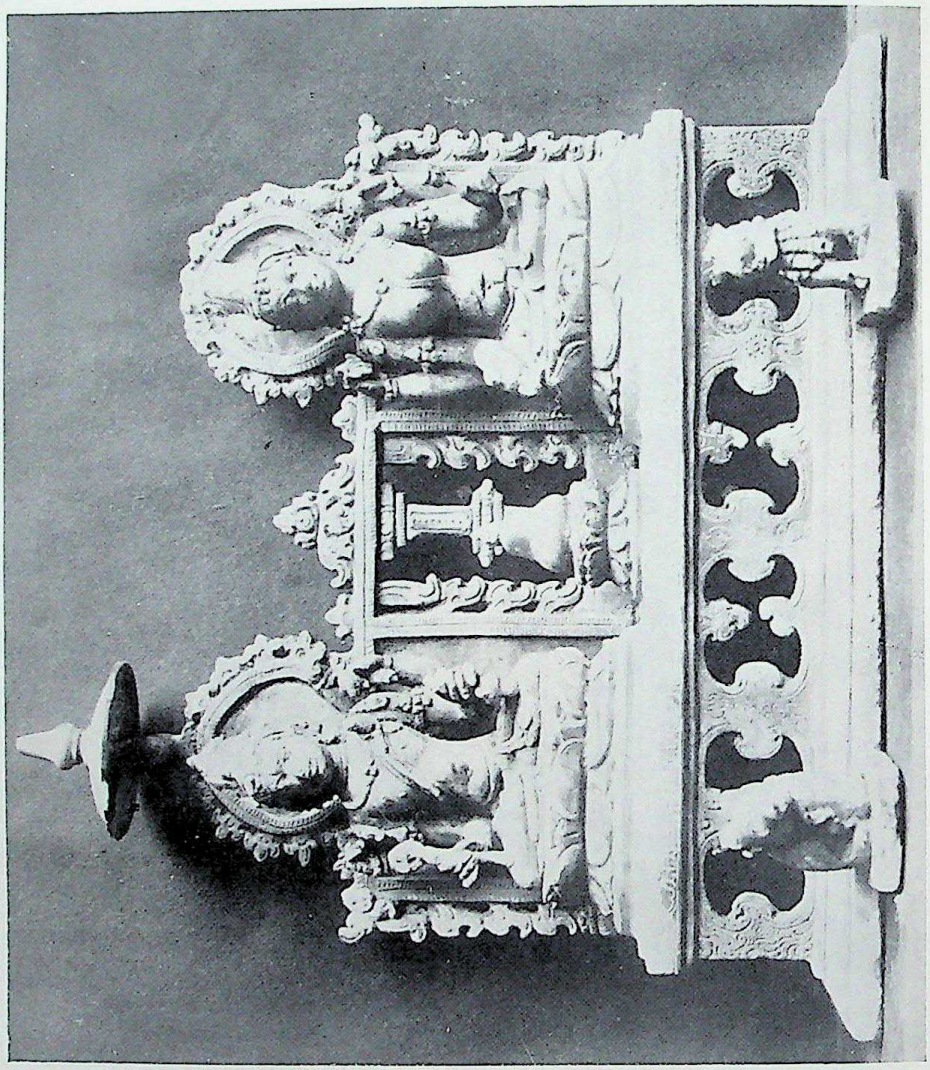

Bronze image of Śiva and Pārvatī, Kertek, Central Java

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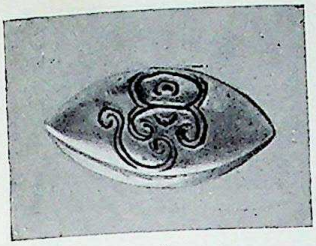
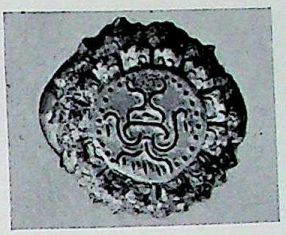


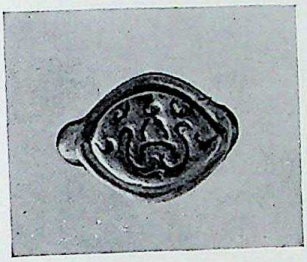
a

b

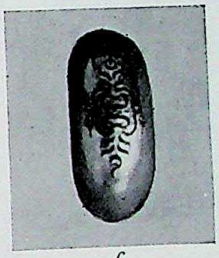


c

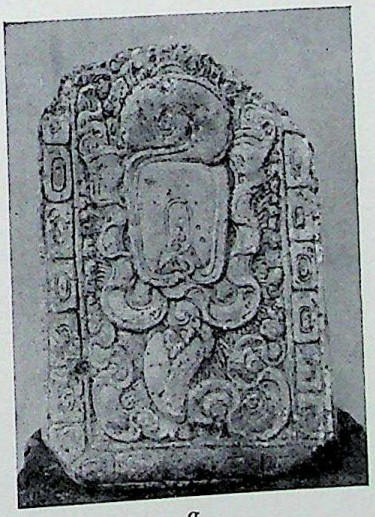
d



e



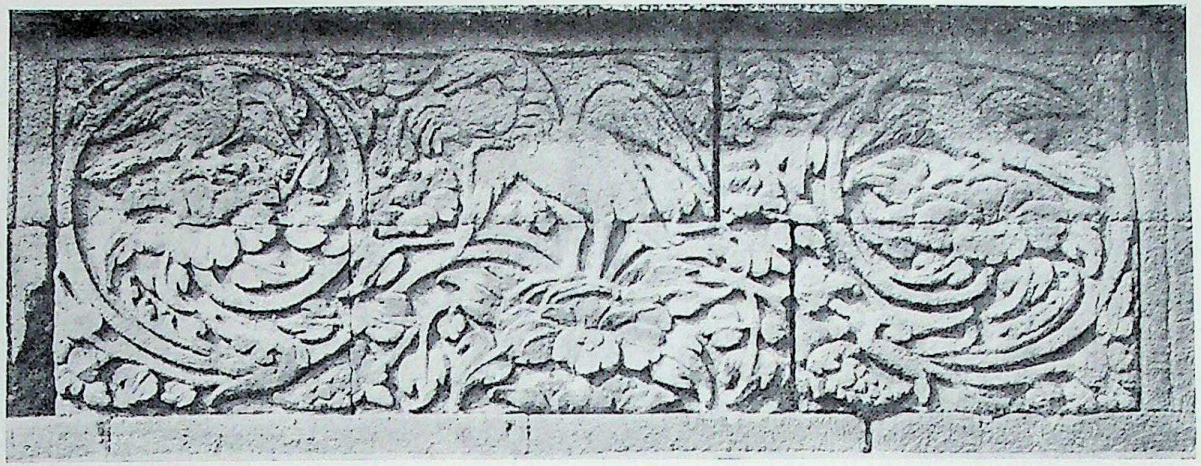
f



g

a-f: Golden finger-rings, Central Java; *g*: decorated slab, Blitar, East Java

SYMBOLS OF THE PADMAMŪLA — THE LOTUS-FLOWER



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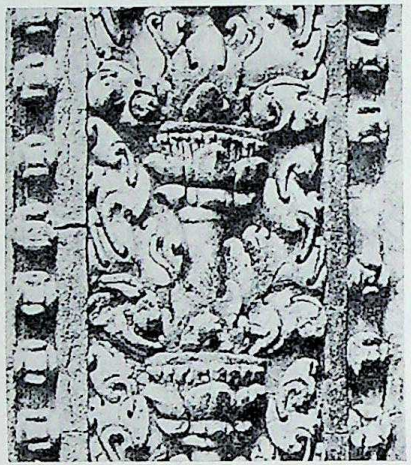
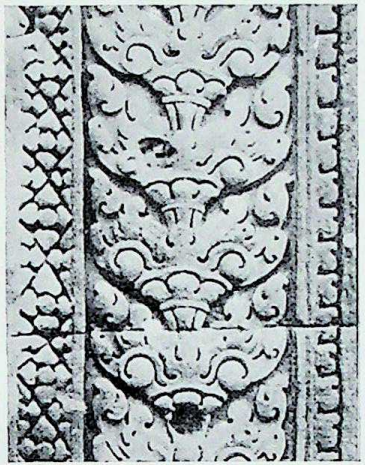
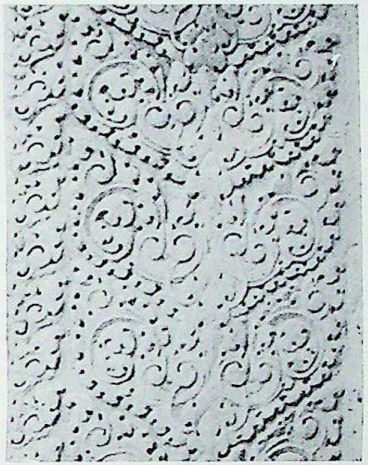


b



c



d

a: Chaṇḍi Meṇḍut, Central Java; *b*: Prah Kô, Cambodia; *c*: Baphūon, Cambodia; *d*: Angkor Vat, Cambodia

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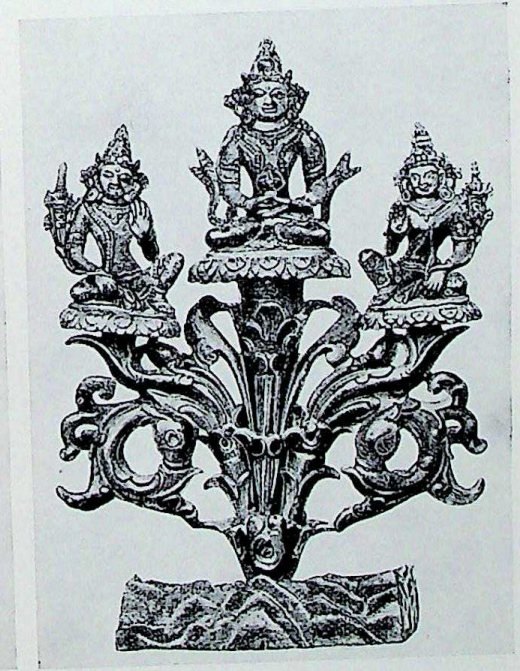
a

b



c

a: Sadakshari-Lokanātha, Bhadrapir, Birbhum distr.; *b*: Mañjughosha, Tibet; *c*: Amitāyus-Mañjuśrī-Vajrapāṇi, Tibet

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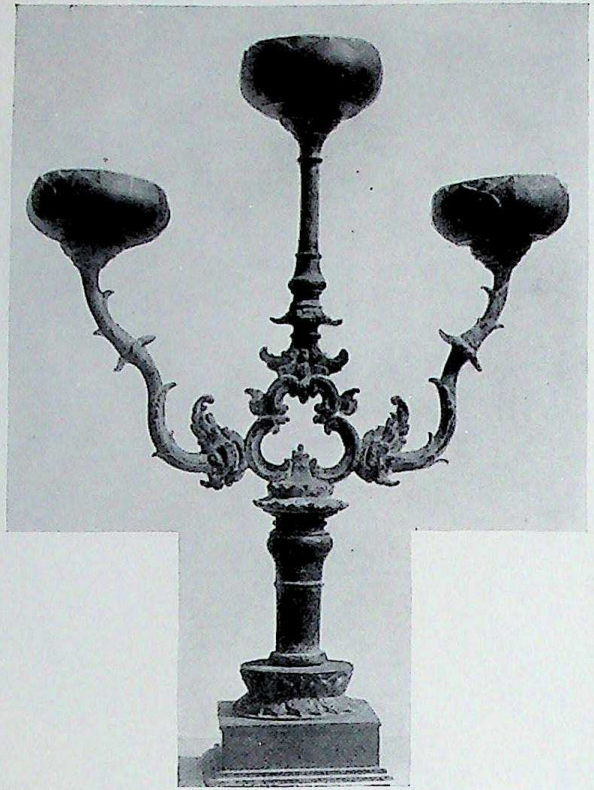
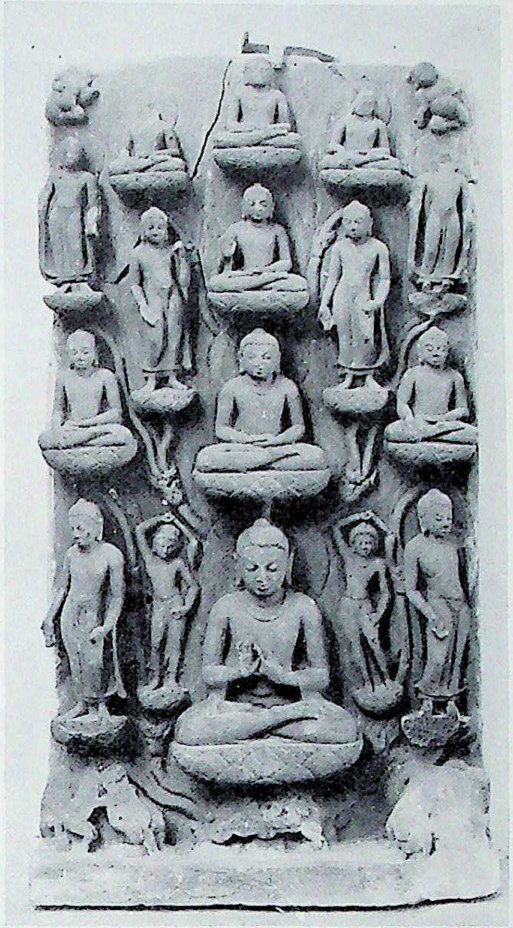


a



b

a: bronze lamp, Central Java; *b*: Sārnāth

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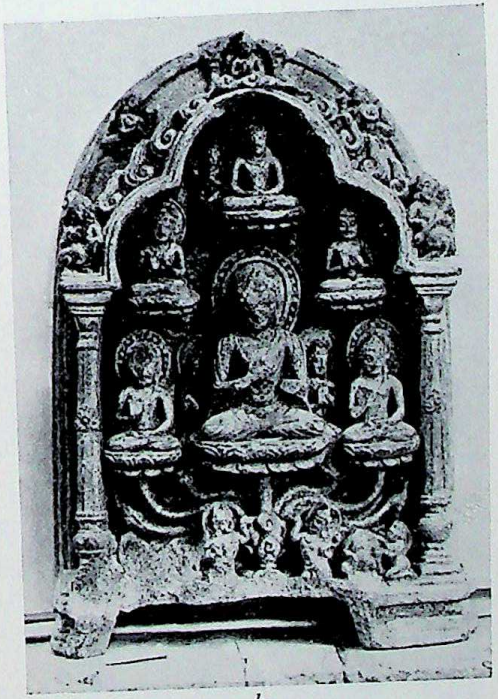
a



b

a: Chinese, A.D. 678; *b*: Sārnāth

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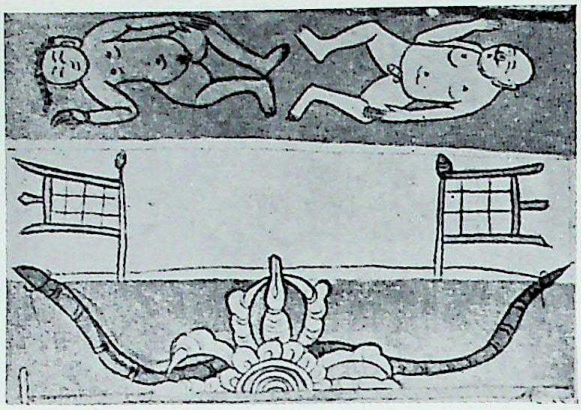
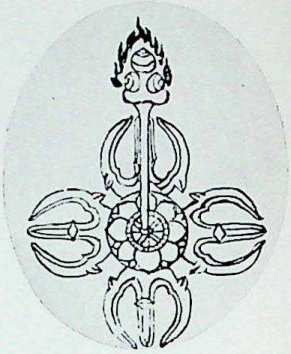


a



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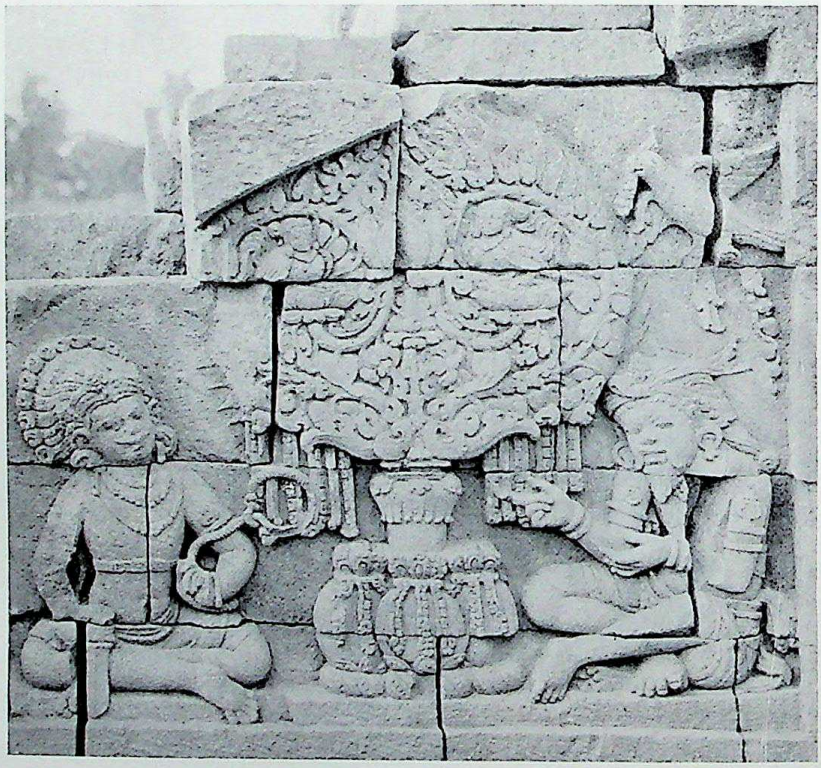
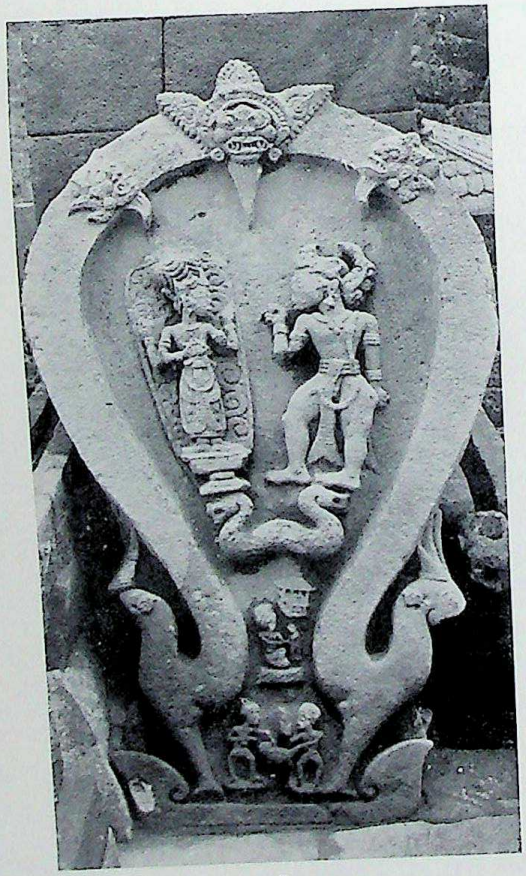
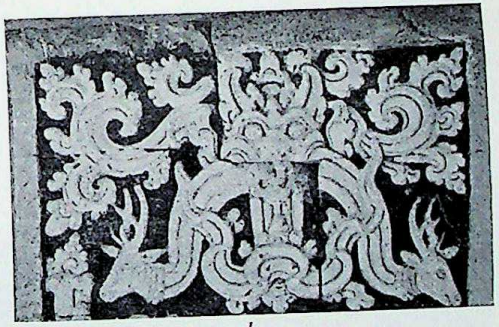


c

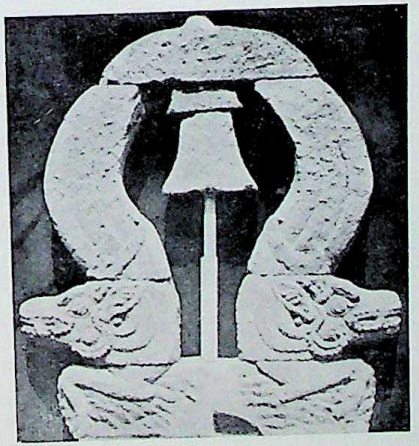
a: From Na-khi MS.; *b*: viśvavajra, Chinese; *c*: Chaṇḍi Sajiwan, Central Java



a



b



c

a: Chaṇḍi Sukuh, Central Java; *b*: Chaṇḍi Panataran, East Java;
c: Gunung Penanggungan, East Java

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a

b

a: Chaṇḍi Bubrah; *b*: Chaṇḍi Plaosan

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a

b

c

a: Sārnāth; *b*: Biaro Bahal, Padang Lawas, Sumatra; *c*: Mathurā

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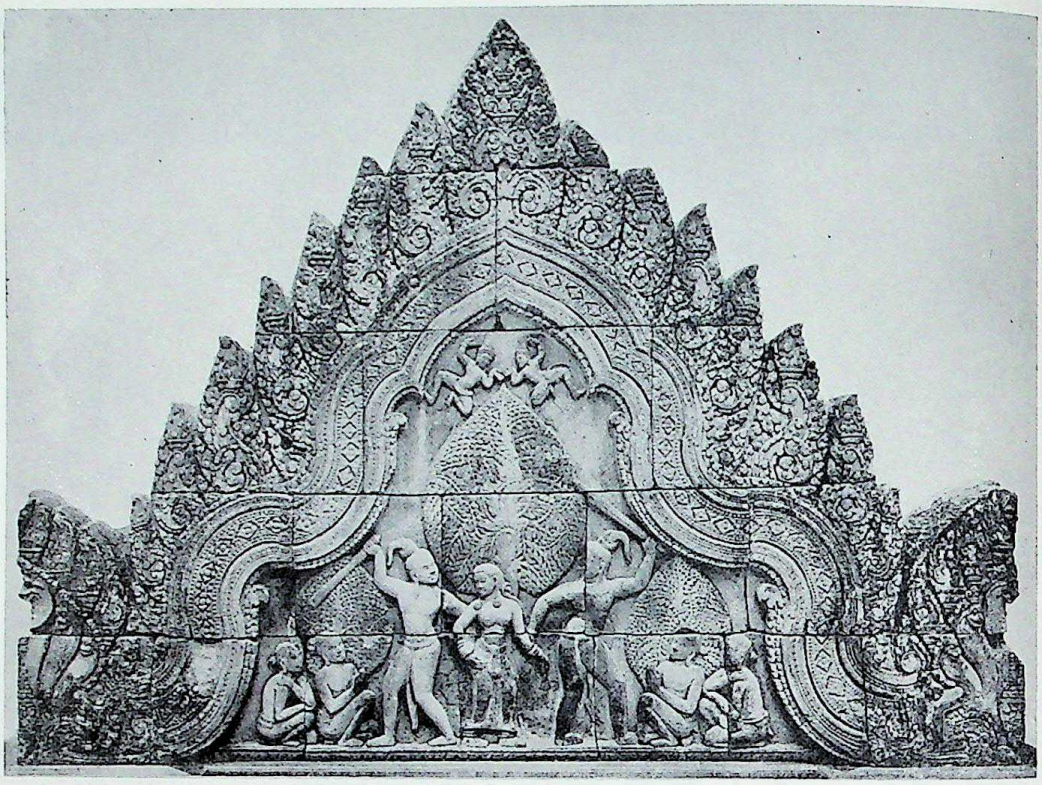
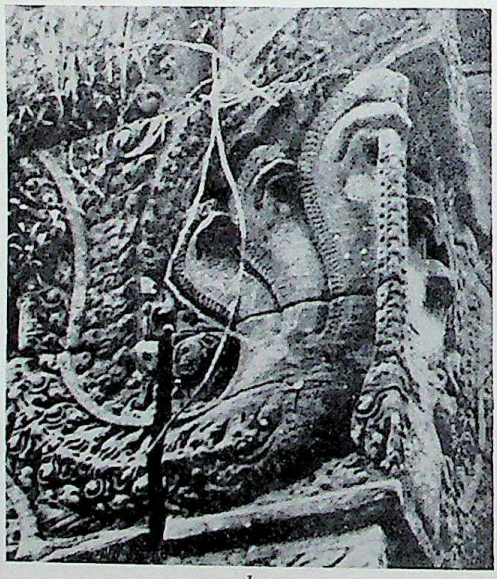


a



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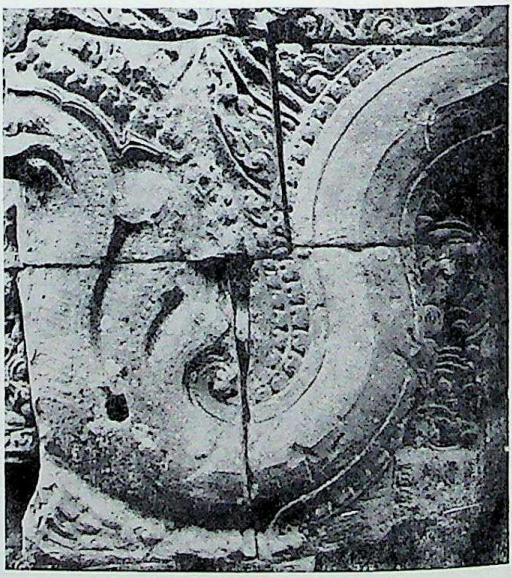
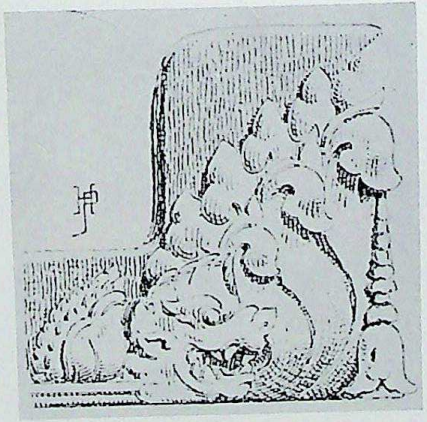


c

a: Bantéay Srei; *b*: Chau Srei Vibol; *c*: Mébon

a

b



c

d

a: Barabuḍur; *b*: Prasat Damrei; *c*: Prasat Sek Sa Tuy; *d*: Bantéay Srei

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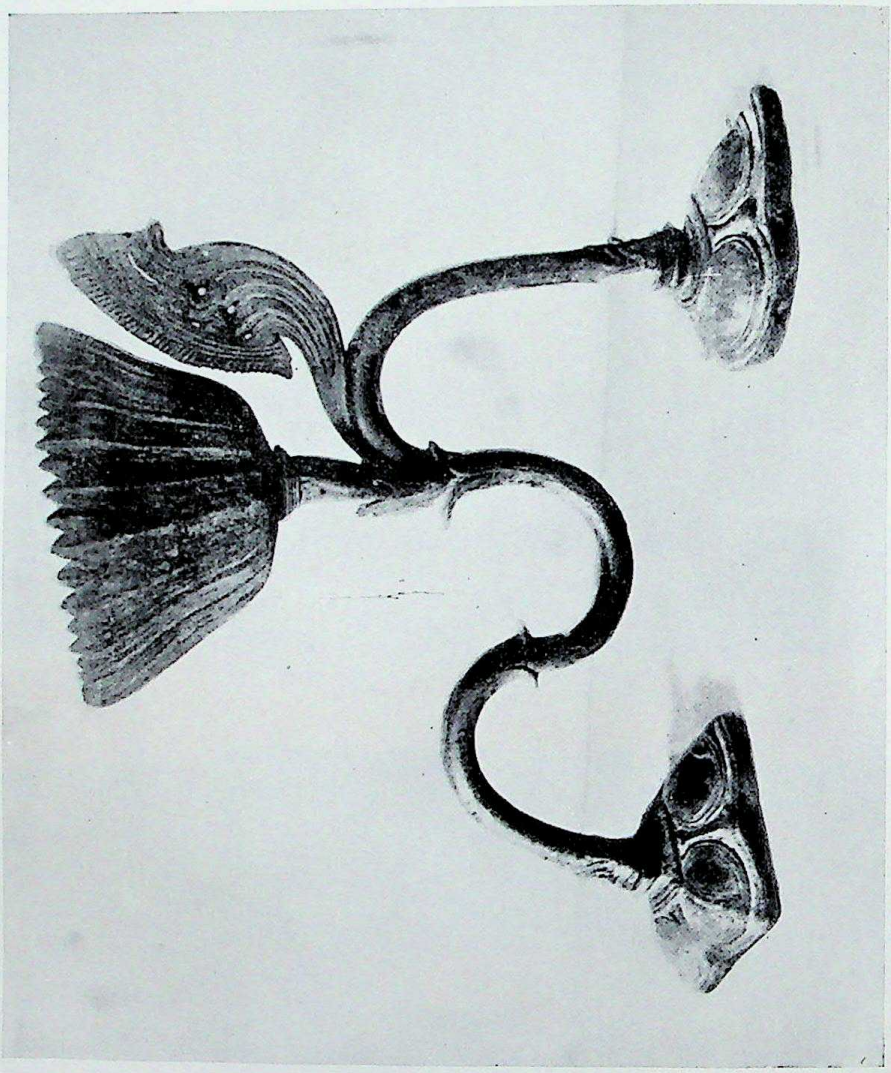
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



Bronze censer, Battambang, Cambodia

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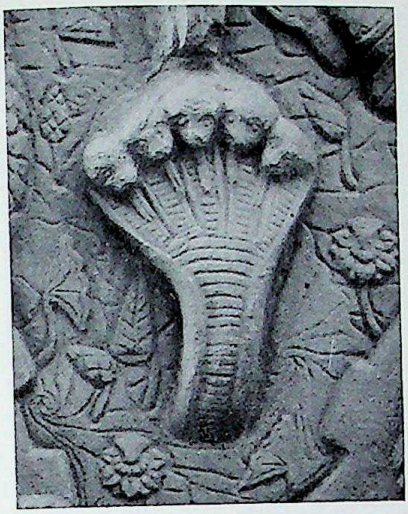

a

b

c

d

a: Bharhut; *b*: Bakong, Cambodia; *c*: Chaṇḍi Bubrah, Central Java; *d*: from Na-khi MS

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Detail of pilaster ornament at Angkor Vat

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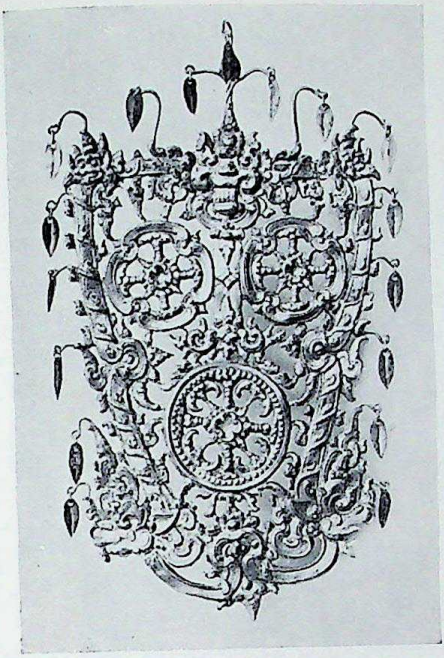
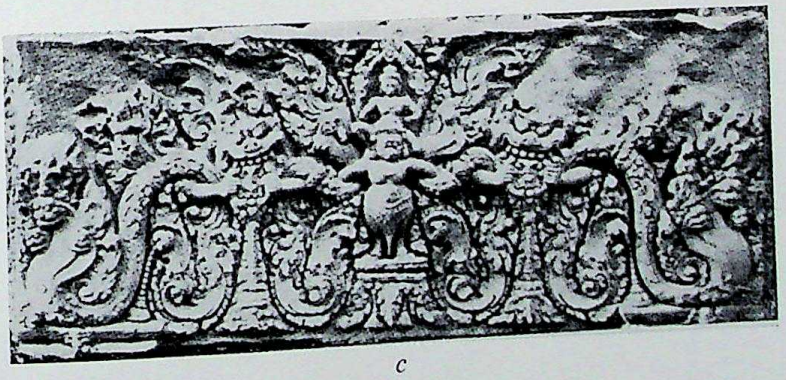


a

b



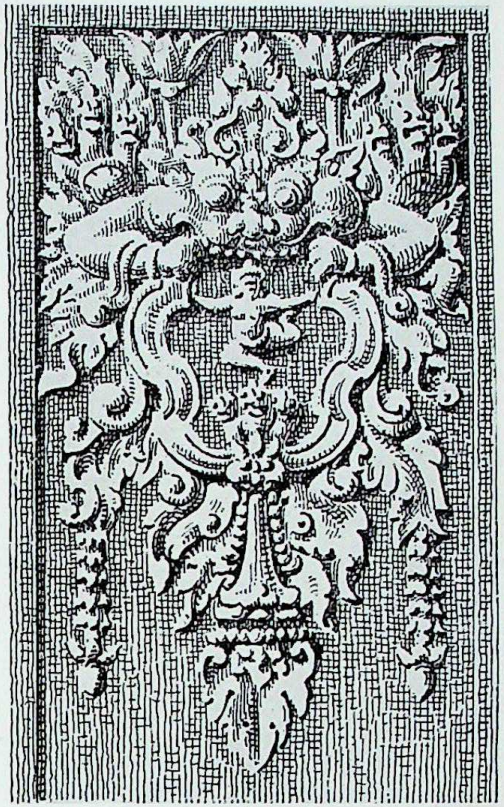
c

a: Golden ornament, East Java; *b*: wayang figure; *c*: lintel, Kôk Pô, Cambodia

a

c

d



b

a: Bathing-place Belahan, East Java; *b*: Bantéay Srei, Cambodia;
c: Phnom Kulên, Cambodia; *d*: Vat Kralan, Cambodia

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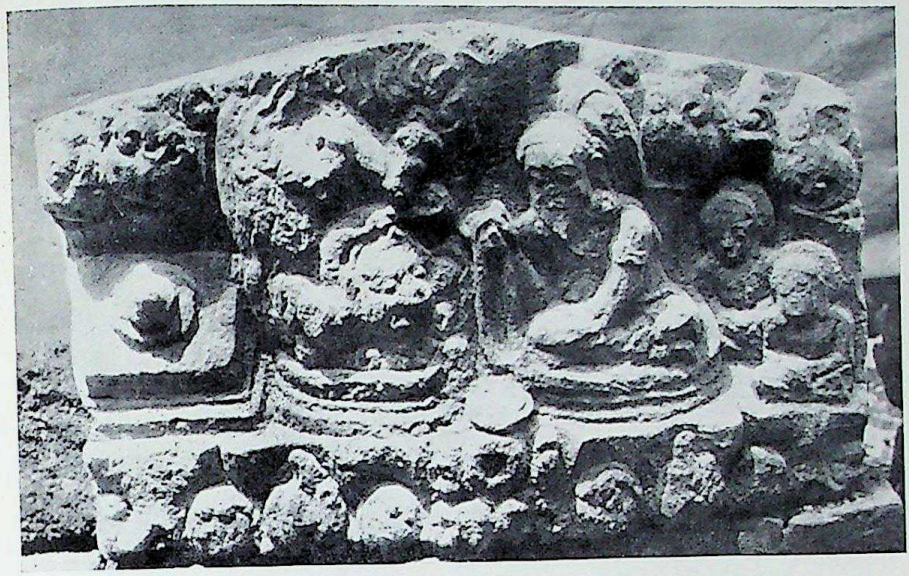
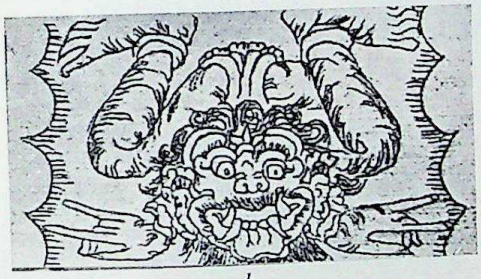


a



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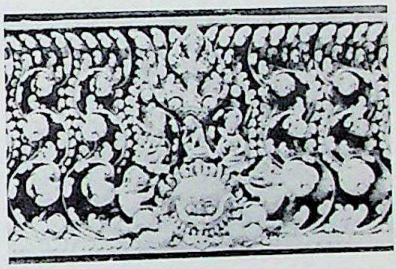

c

d

e

a: Bathing-place Jalatuṇḍa, East Java; *b*: Kala songsang from a Balinese MS; *c*: monsterhead as Sūrya, Thommanon, Cambodia; *d* and *e*: one-eyed monsterheads, Bali

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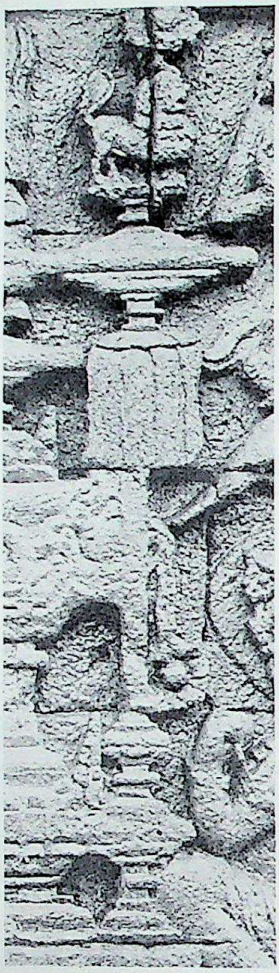
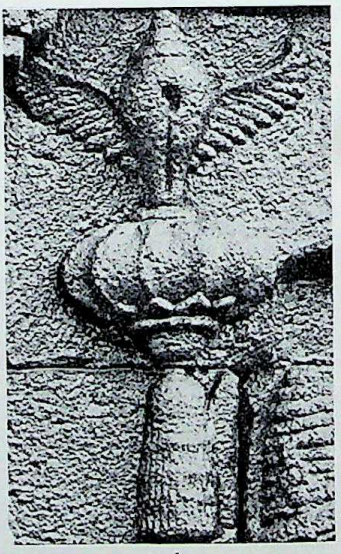


a

b

c



d

a-d: Top-pieces of standards, Barabuḍur

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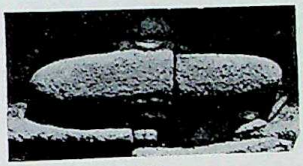
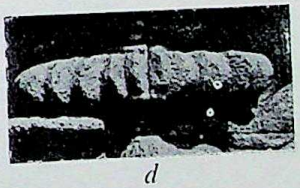
a

b



c



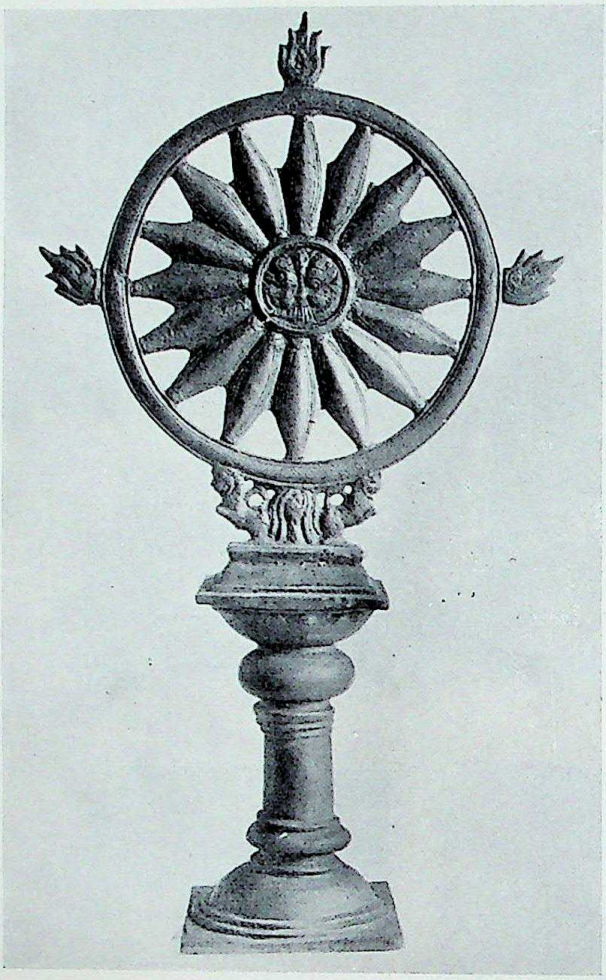
d

f

e

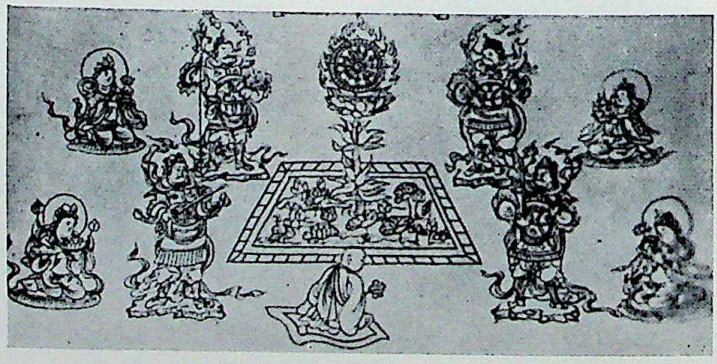
a-f: Top-pieces of standards, Barabuḍur

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



a

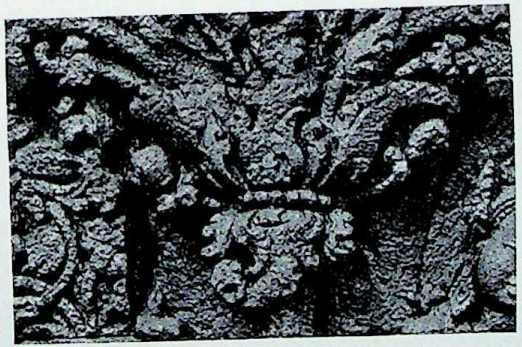
b



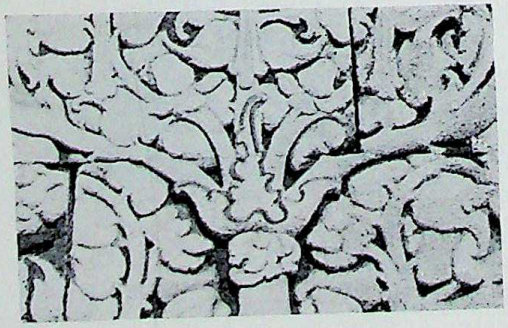
c

a: Sudarśanachakra, South India; *b*: Amarāvatī; *c*: Chinese

a



b



c

d

a: Chaṇḍi Kedaton, East Java; *b-d*: Barabuḍur

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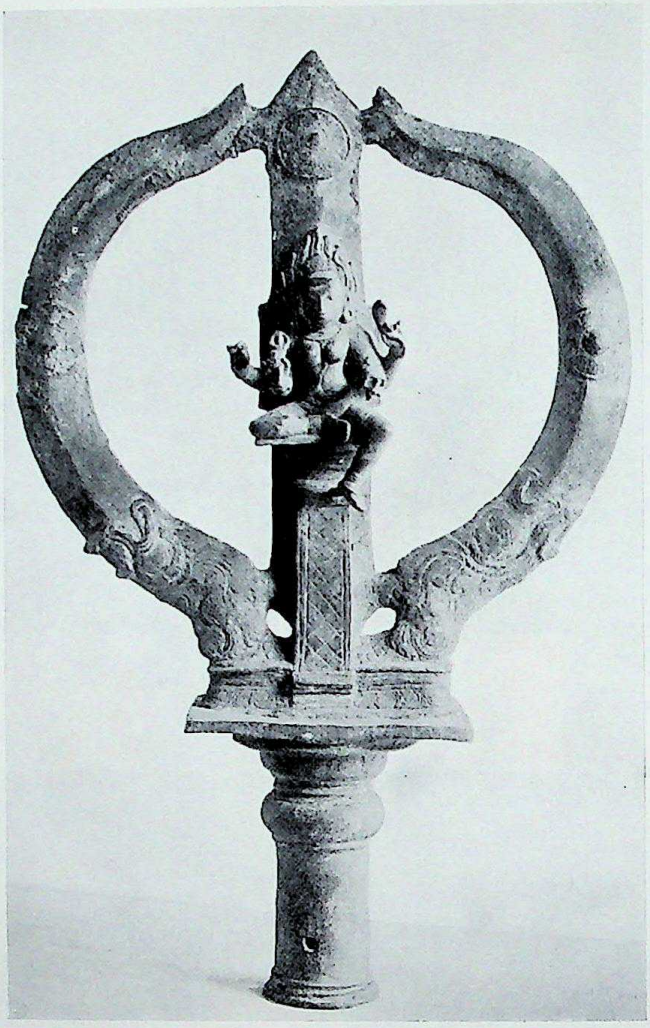
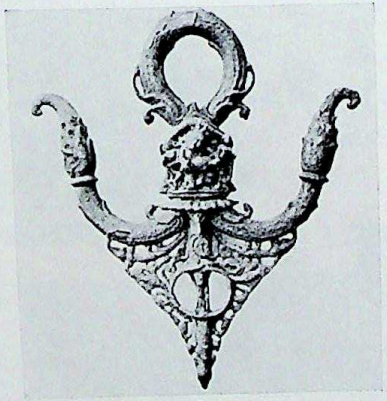


Bronze triśūla, South India

a



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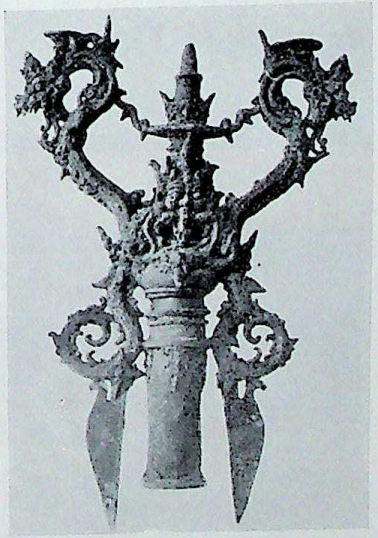

c

a: Bronze bell, Central Java; *b*: bronze trident, Bengal; *c*: bronze top-piece of a ceremonial standard, East Java

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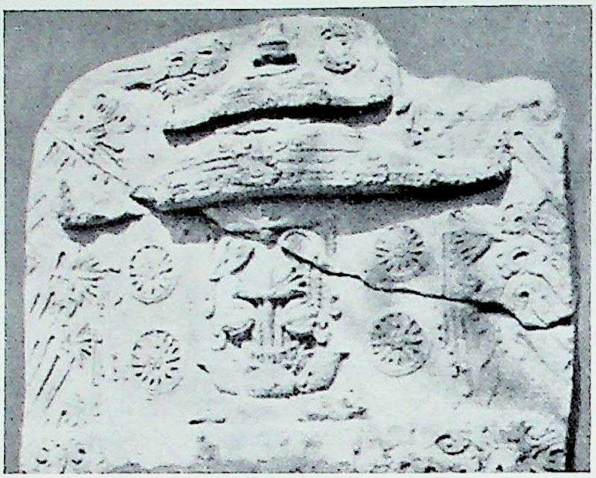
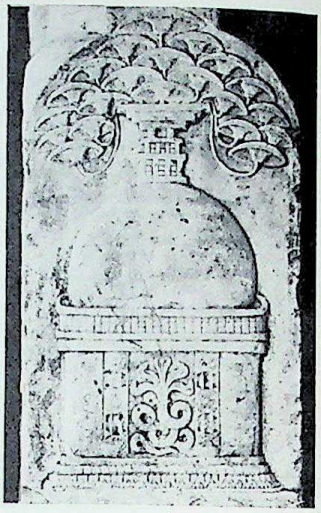


a



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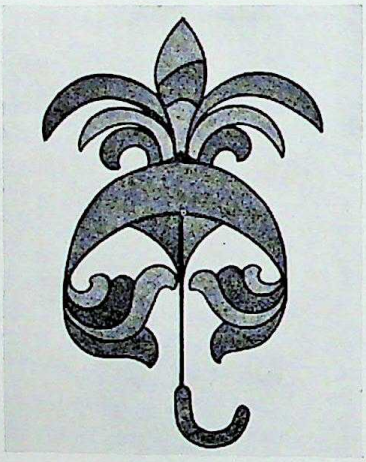

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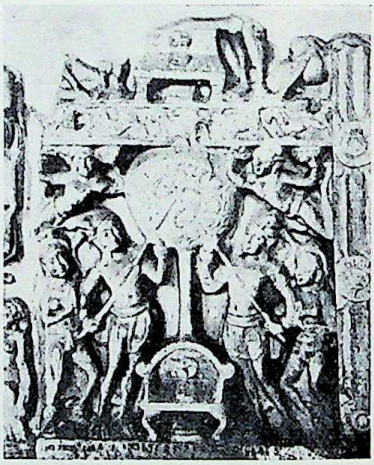

d

a: Top-piece of an image, Belahan, East Java; *b* and *d*: Amarāvatī; *c*: Ngaju-Dyak, Borneo

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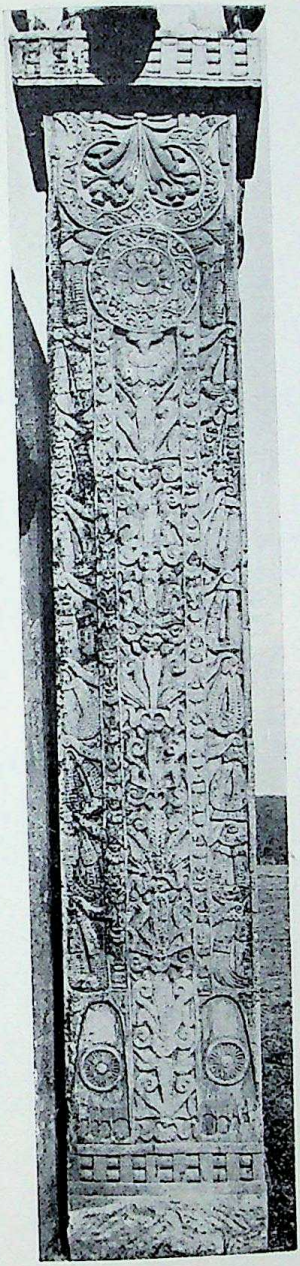
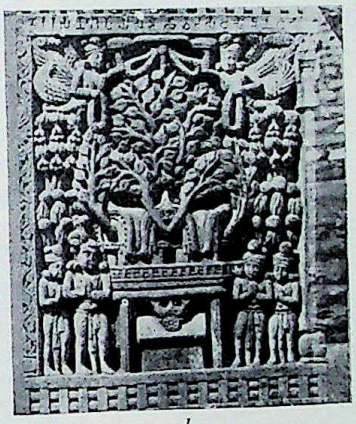


a

b

c



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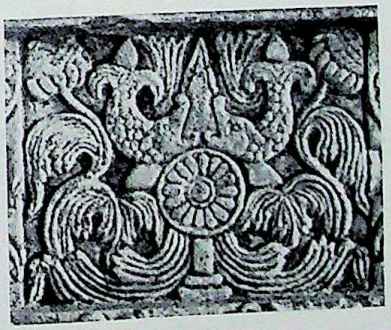

e

a: *b* and *d*: Sānchi; *c* and *e*: Amarāvatī

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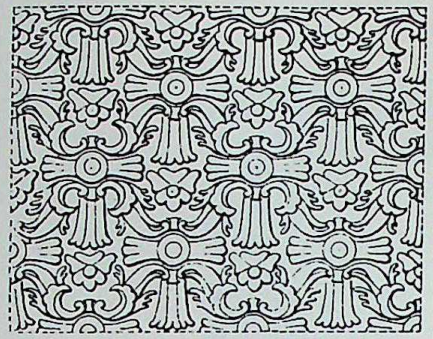

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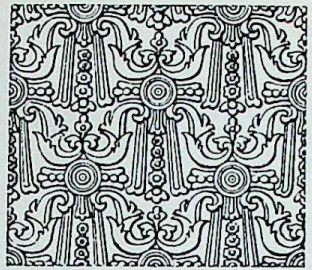

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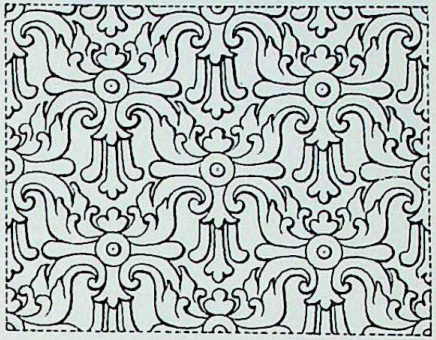

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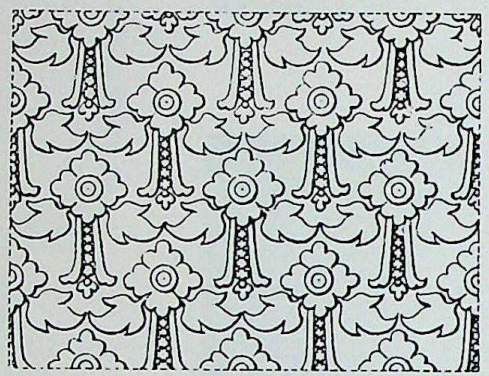

d

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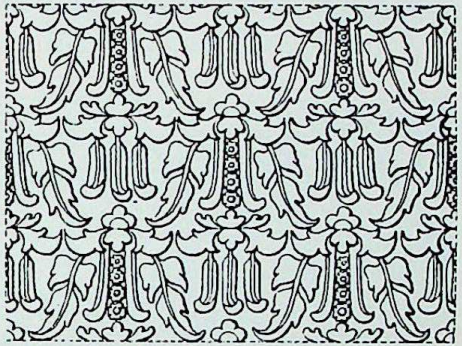

f

a-d and *f*: Central Javanese temples; *e*: Loley, Cambodia

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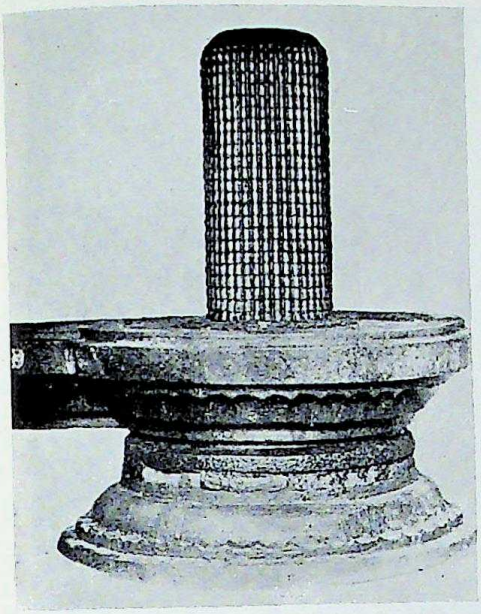
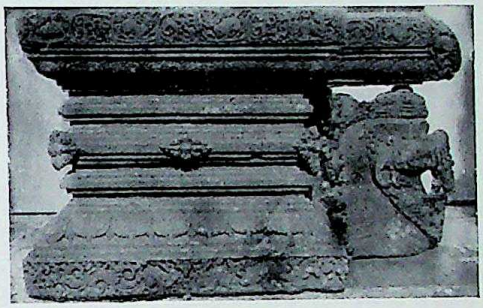


a



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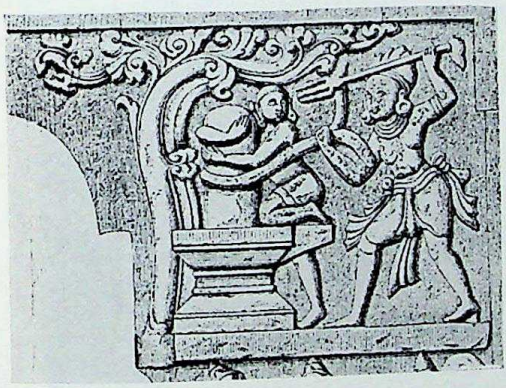

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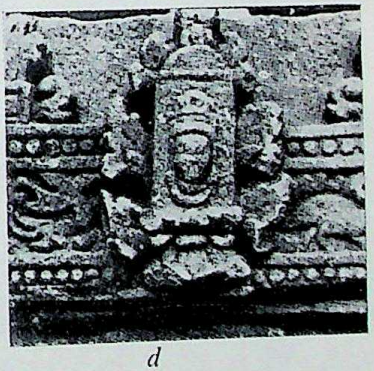

d

a: Tiruvottiyūr, South India; *b*: Pajarakan, East Java; *c*: Kālaharamūrti, South India; *d*: lintel, Vat En Khna, Cambodia

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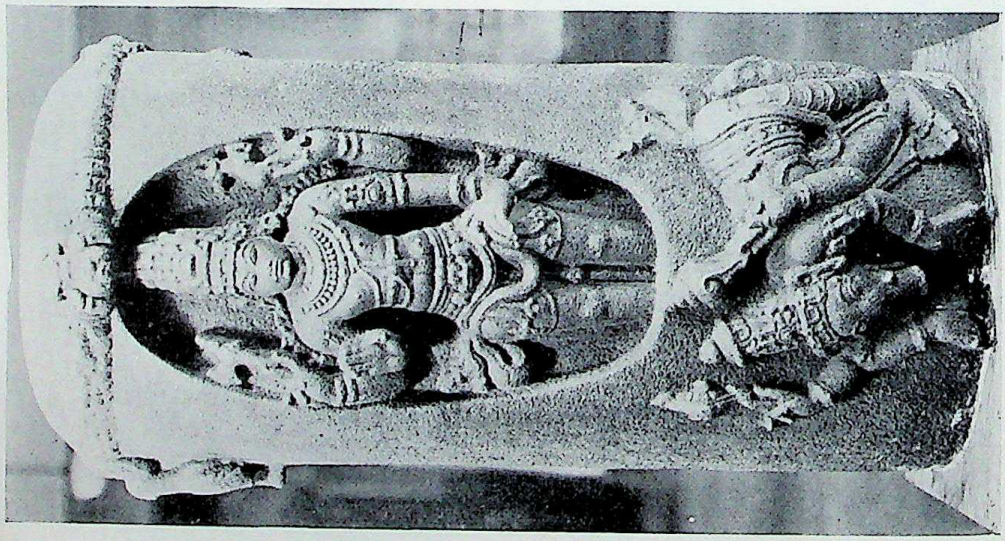
b



a

a: South India; *b*: Balinese painting

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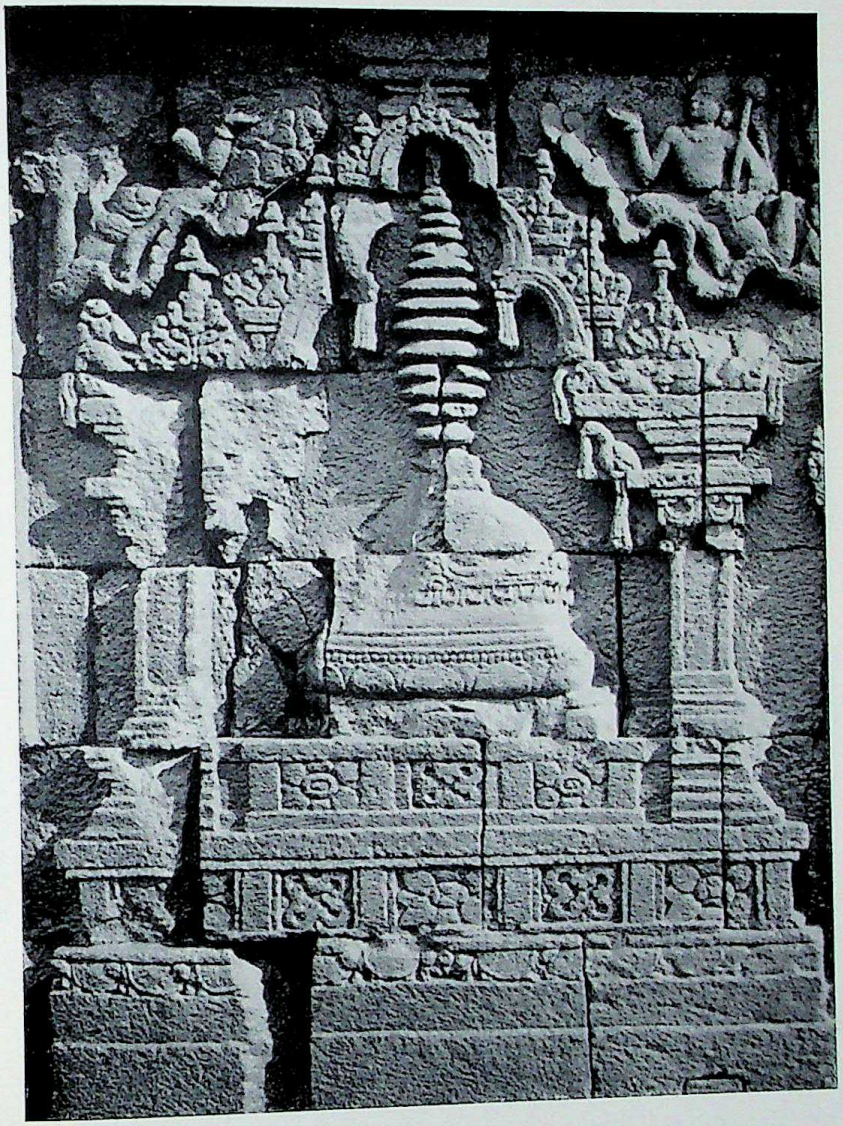
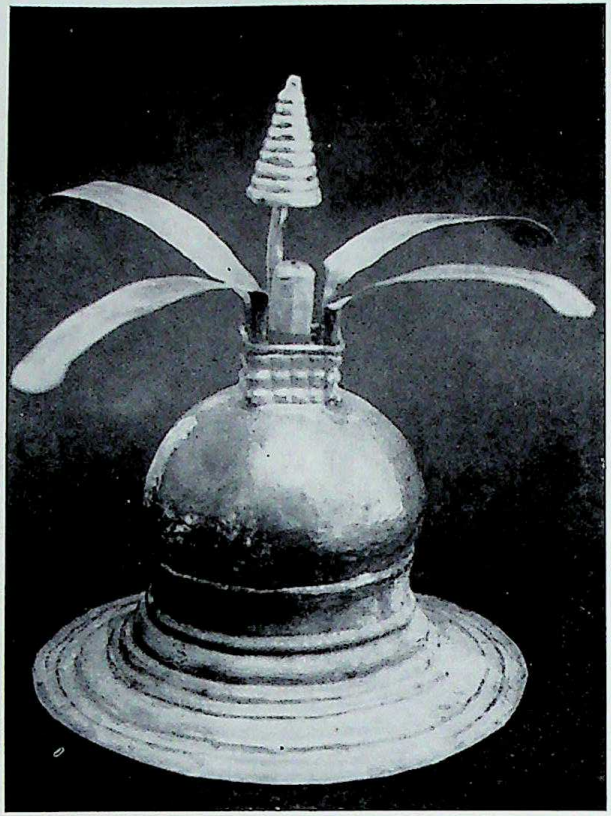


Barabaḍur



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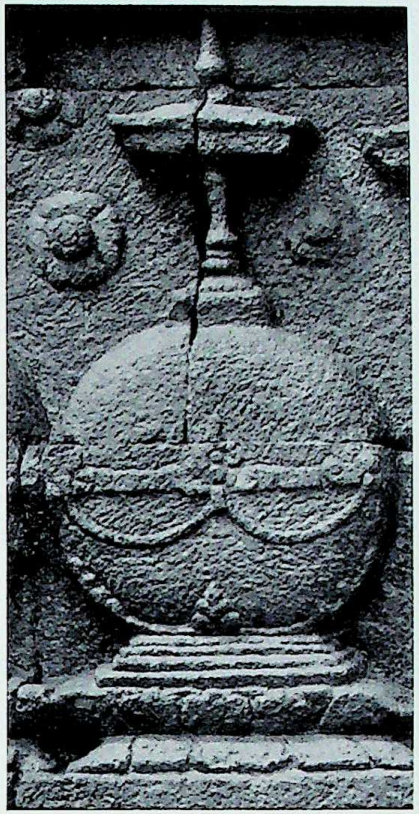
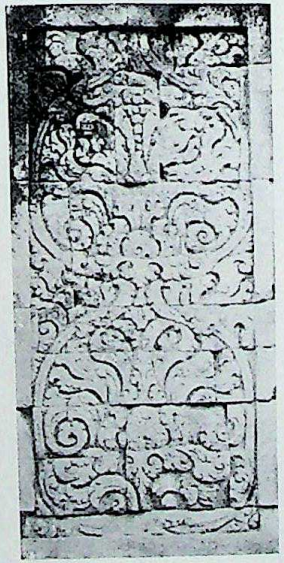


b

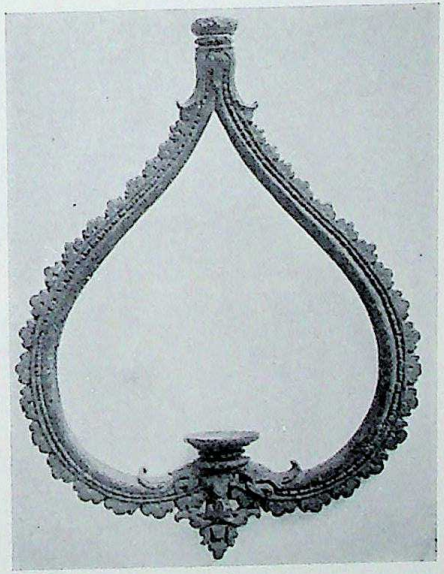
a: Golden reliquary, Anurādhapura, Ceylon; *b*: Barabuḍur

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

a



b



c

a: Blitar, East Java; *b*: Chaṇḍi Pringapus, Central Java; *c*: hanging lamp, Central Java

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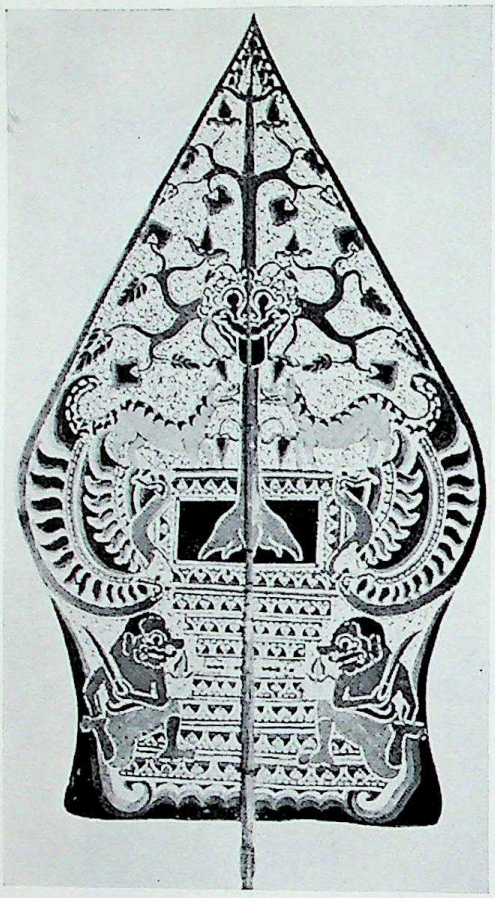
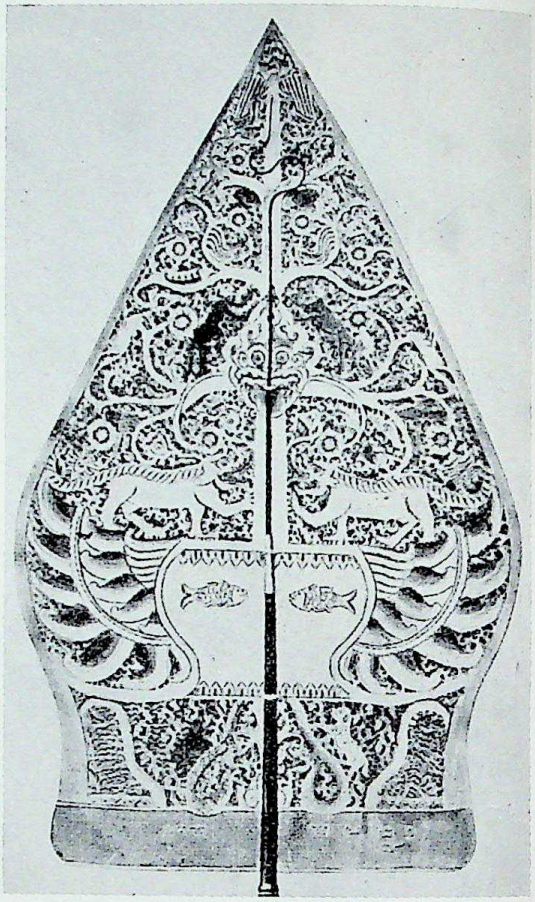


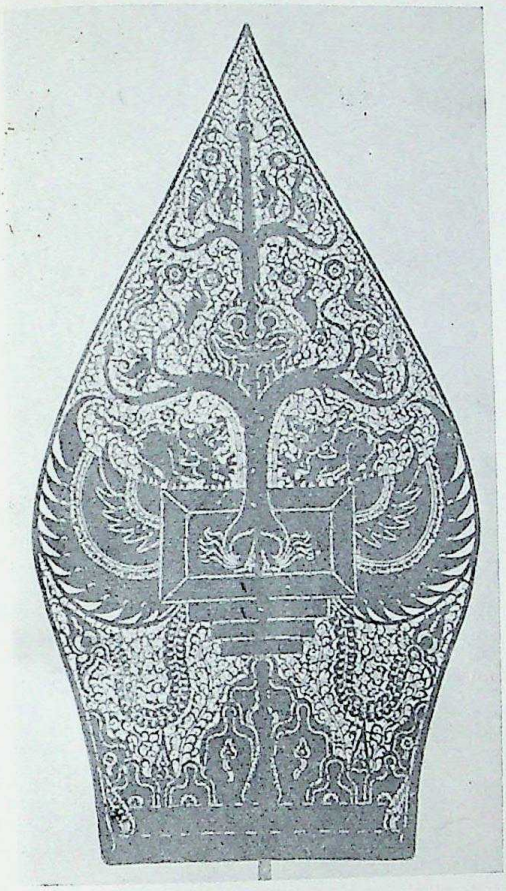
a



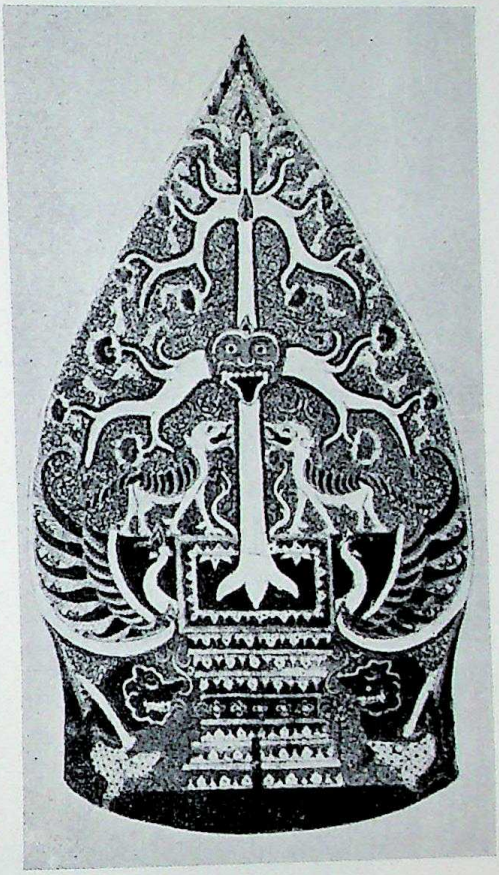
b

The 'gunungan' of the Javanese wayang

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



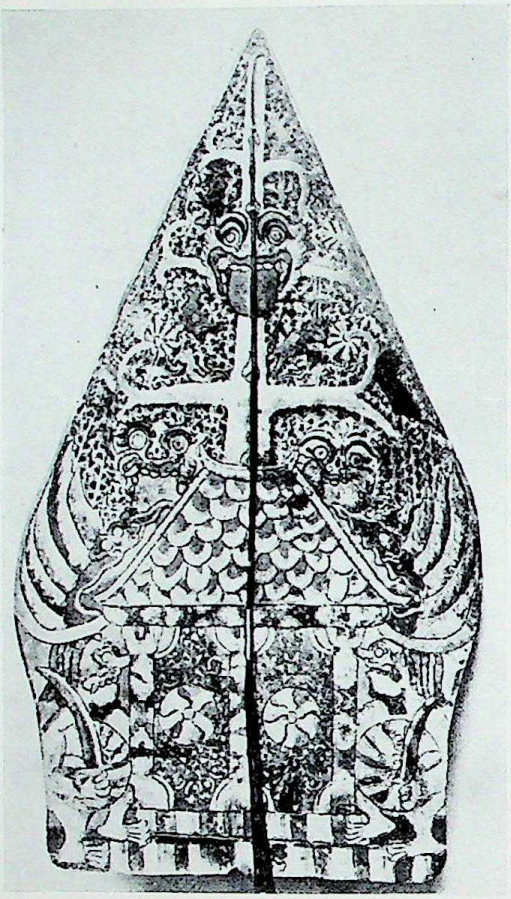
a



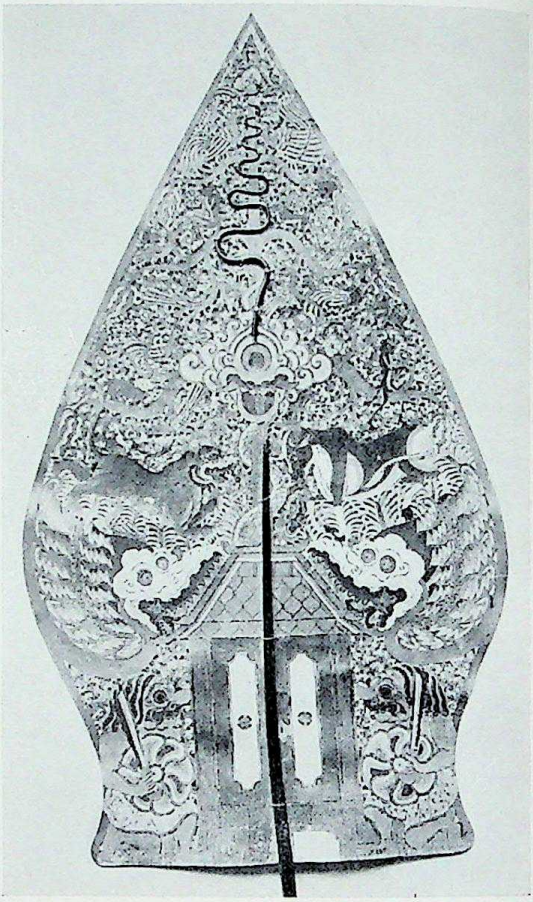
b

The 'gunungan' of the Javanese wayang

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



a

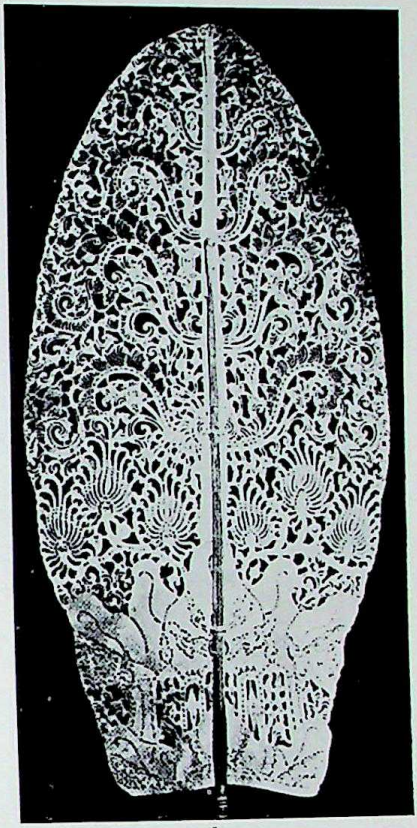


b

The 'gunungan' of the Javanese wayang

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

a



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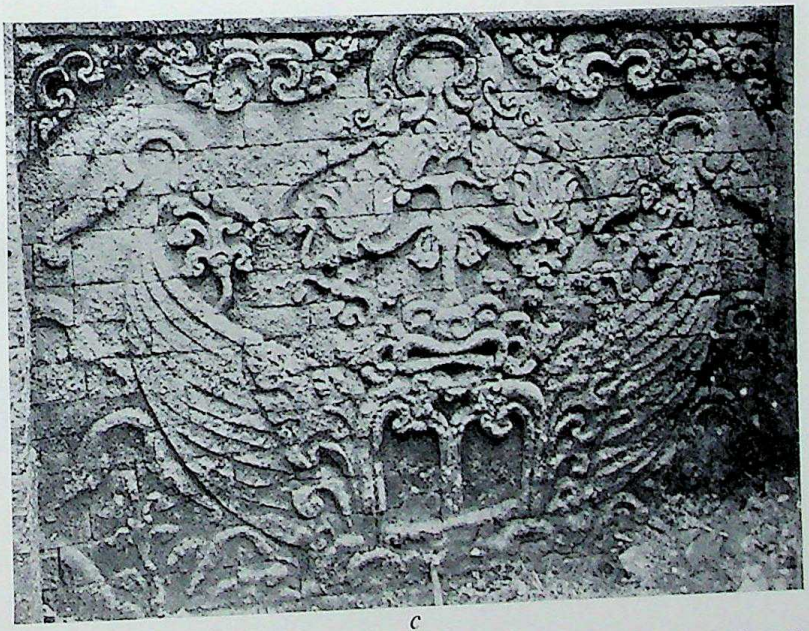

c

a and *b*: the 'gunungan' of the Balinese wayang Sendang Duwur, East Java

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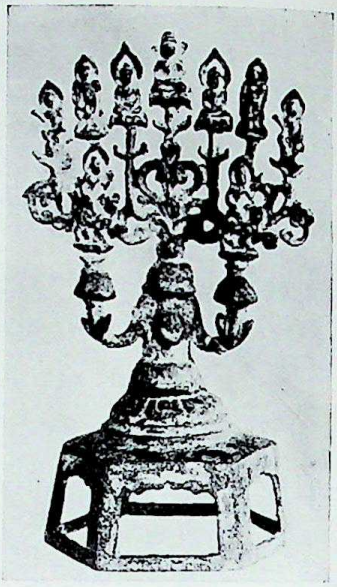
a



b

c

d

e

a: Bharhut; *b*: bronze image, China; *c-e*: bronze images, Siam

a

b

a: Bronze lamp, South India; *b*: Nāgarāja, Mathurā

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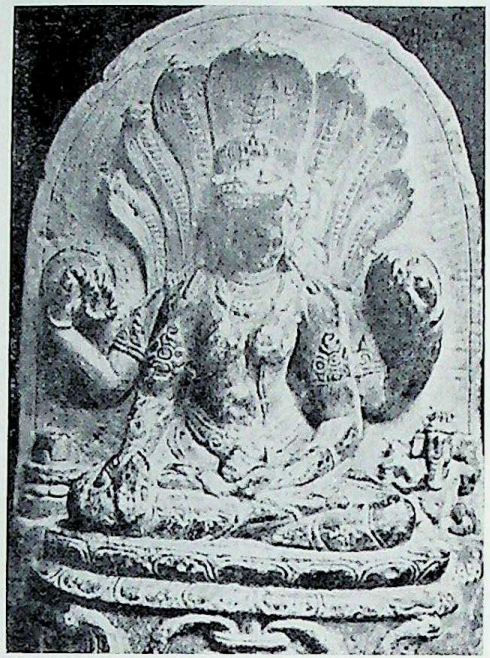

a

b

a: Image of Mānasā, Bihar; *b*: unknown god, Sonarang, Dacca distr.

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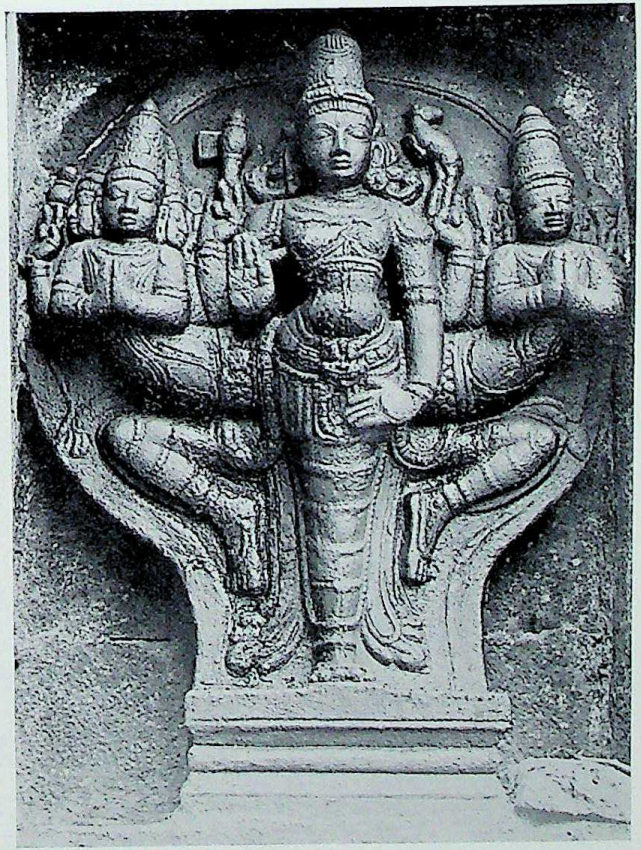
a



b

a and *b*: South India

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Chaṇḍi Meṇḍut, Central Java

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

Chaṇḍi Meṇḍut, Central Java

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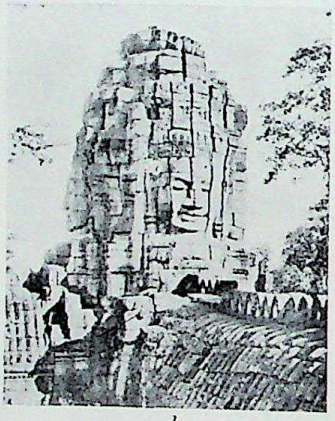
a

b

c

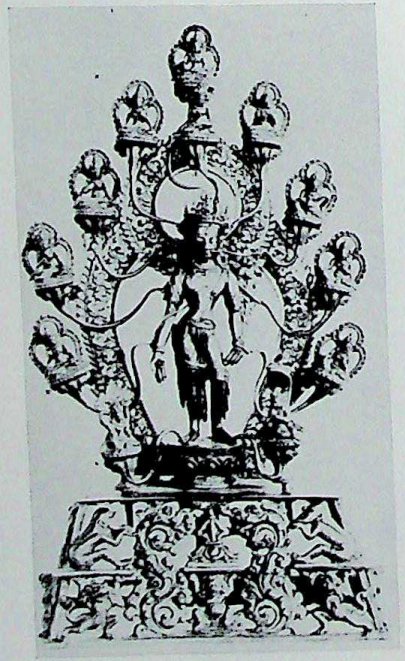


d

e

a: Brahmā image, Chaṇḍi Singosari, East Java; *b*: liṅga, Chaṇḍi Sukuh, Central Java; *c*: terra-cotta relief, Pahārpur, Rājshāhi distr.; *d*: Bayon, Cambodia; *e*: chatuḥkāya image, Pejeng, Bali

THE LOTUS AS ATTRIBUTE OF BUDDHIST GODS, TIBET



a

b

c

a: Avalokiteśvara; *b*: White Tārā; *c*: Bhaishajyaguru

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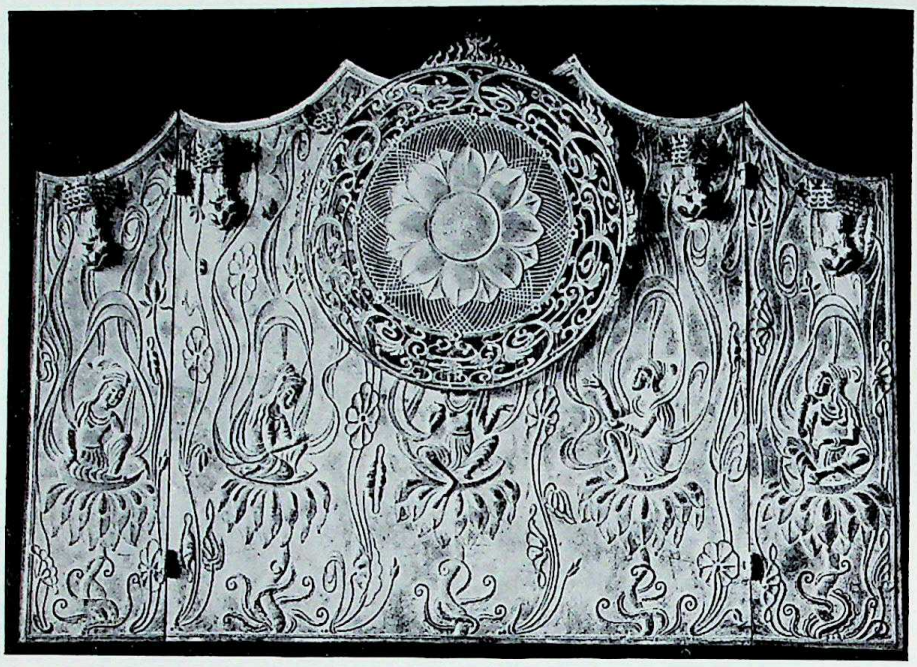
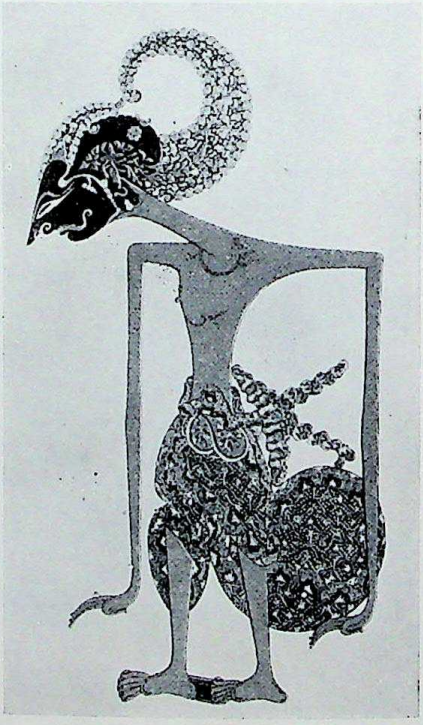
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



a

b



c

a: Reredos of Amida Trinity, 8th century, Japan; *b*: Krishṇa Venugopāla, South India; *c*: wayang puppet of Arjuna, Java

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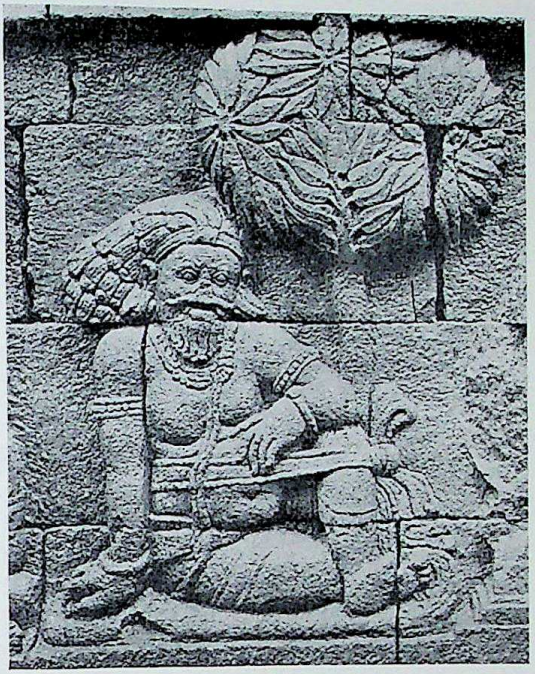
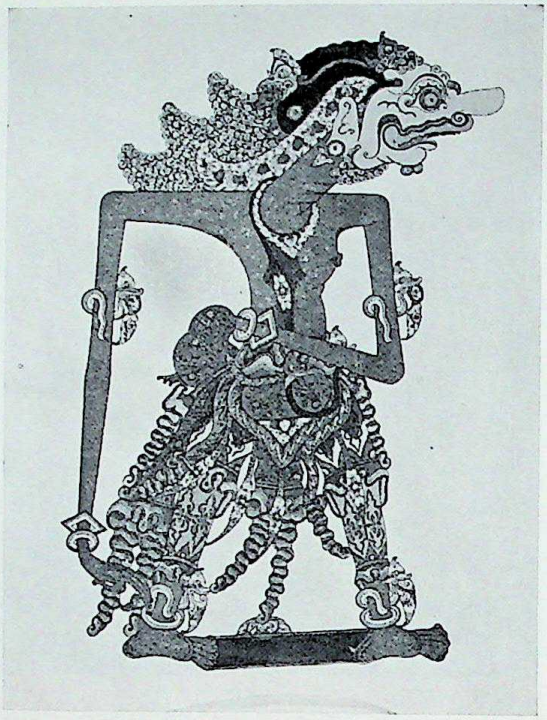


a

b

a: Yaksha, Barabuḍur; *b*: Yamāntaka, Tibet

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



a

b

a: Wayang figure, Java; *b*: wayang figure, Bali

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Bubhuksha and Gagang aking, Chaṇḍi Surawana, East Java

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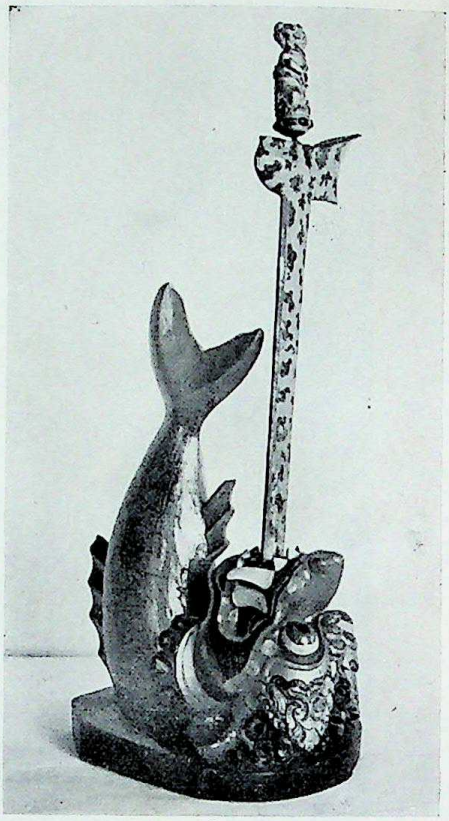
a



b

c

d

a: Wooden post with rākshasa figure; *b*: kris stand, Bali; *c* and *d*: hilts of Javanese krisses

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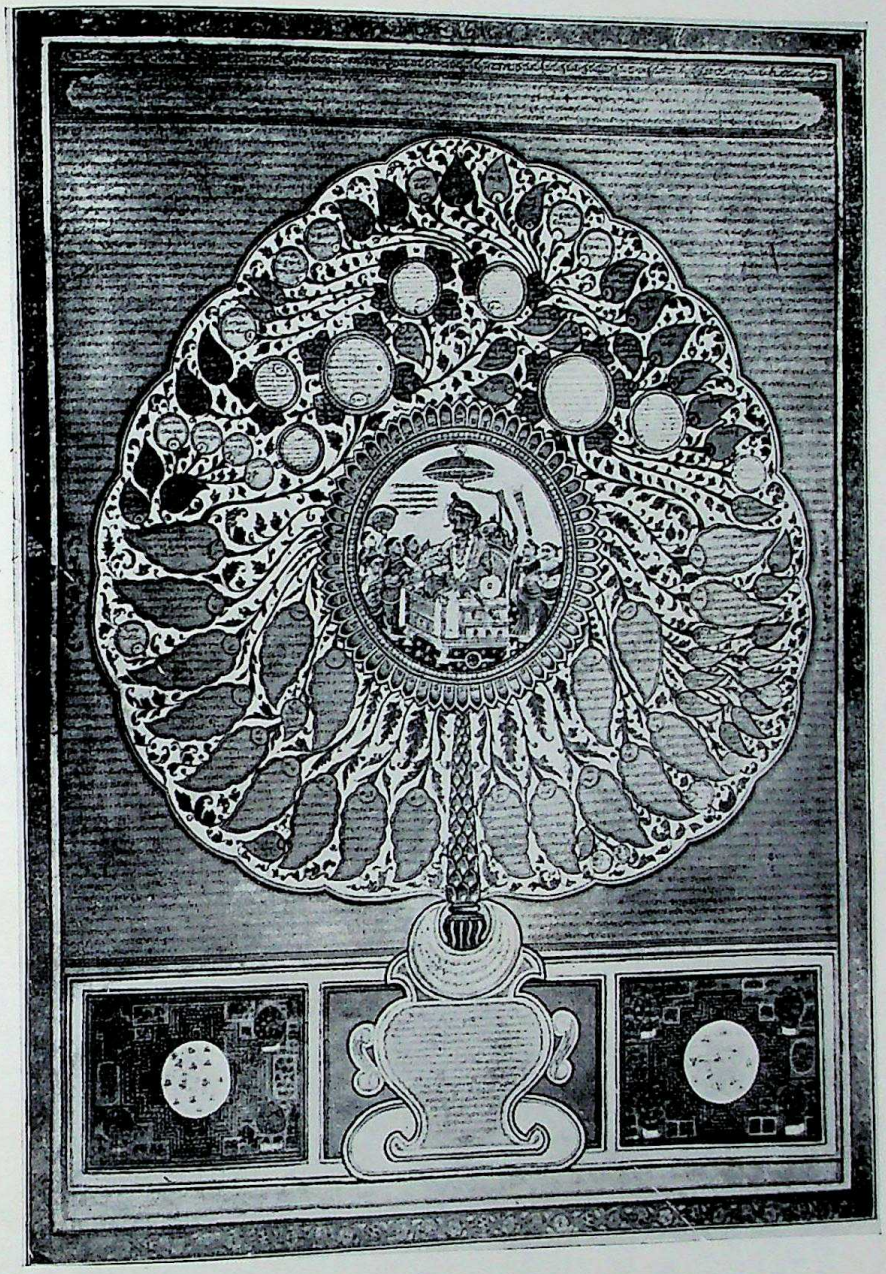

Nineteenth century painting at the Joganmohan Palace, Mysore, representing all the members of the family of Krishṇarāja Vadeyar III

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From the wrapper of a booklet titled Bhāratapārijātam by Swāmi Śrī Bhagavadāchārya, containing Gandhi's biography in Sanskrit verse. The portrait of the Mahātma is here pictured as the radiating sun functioning as the brahmamūla of the Cosmic Tree, and at the same time occupying the place where in the Indian subcontinent the Cosmic Mountain is situated. Tree and India coincide in the picture.

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